THE Hudson REVIEW

EZRA POUND:
Women of Trachis

JOSEPH KERMAN:
Opera à la Mode

CHARLES S. SINGLETON:
End of a Poem

WILLIAM BECKER:
The New American Play

HOWARD NEMEROV:
Yore—a story

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ARTICLES AND REVIEWS BY WILLIAM ARROWSMITH, NORTHROP FRYE, JOHN HOLLOWAY, HUGH KENNER, MARVIN MUDRICK.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

A volume of literary essays by EZRA POUND, edited and with an introduction by T. S. Eliot, is to be published by New Directions in February.

PETER H. LEE, a young Korean writer, was born in Seoul, and has recently been studying at Yale. At present traveling in Korea, he will be continuing his studies in Switzerland in the near future.

CHARLES S. SINGLETON is professor of Italian at Harvard; a volume of his studies on *The Divine Comedy* is to be published soon by the Harvard University Press.

HARRY DUNCAN, the poet and co-director of the Cummington Press, is now living in Rome.

MARIANNE MOORE'S *Collected Poems* appeared in 1951 (Macmillan). Her version of the La Fontaine *Fables* is to be published in the Spring by Viking.

HOWARD NEMEROV has a new novel and a new book of verse ready, and will be visiting England in the Spring.

JOSEPH KERMAN and WILLIAM BECKER write regularly on music and theatre for this Review.

NORTHROP FRYE has edited the recent Modern Library edition of Blake, and is engaged on a book on the theory of criticism.

JOHN HOLLOWAY is a British poet, philosopher, and critic, whose work has previously appeared in this Review.

HUGH KENNER and MARVIN MUDRICK teach at the Santa Barbara College of the University of California.

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SOPHOKLES[1]

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a version by EZRA POUND

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A version for KITASONO KATUE, hoping he will use it on my dear old friend Miscio Ito, or take it to the Minoru if they can be persuaded to add to their repertoire.

PERSONAE

The Day's Air, DAIANEIRA, *daughter of Oineus.*
HERAKLES ZEUSON, *the Solar vitality.*
AKHELOÖS, *a river, symbol of the power of damp and darkness, triform as water, cloud and rain.*
HYLLOS, *son of Herakles and Daysair.*
LIKHAS, *a herald.*
A messenger.
A nurse, or housekeeper, old and tottery, physically smaller than Daysair.
IOLE, *Tomorrow, daughter of Eurytus, a King.*
Captive women.
Girls of Trachis.

DAYSAIR: "No man knows his luck 'til he's dead."
They've been saying that for a long time
but it's not true in my case. Mine's soggy.
Don't have to go to hell to find that out.

I had a worse scare about getting married than any
girl in Pleuron, my father's place in Aetolia.
First came a three-twisted river, Akheloös,
part bullheaded cloud, he looked like,

[1]Kung 551-579; Sophokles 495-406

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part like a slicky snake with scales on it
shining, then it would look like a bullheaded man
with water dripping out of his whiskers, black ones.

Bed with that! I ask you!

And Herakles Zeuson got me out of it somehow,
I don't know how he managed with that wet horror,
you might find out from some impartial witness
who could watch without being terrorized.

Looks are my trouble. And that
wasn't the end of trouble.

Herakles never gets sight of his children,
like a farmer who sows a crop and doesn't
look at it again till harvest.
Always away on one assignment or another
one terror after another,
always for someone else.

We been outlawed ever since he kill'd Iphitz,
living here in Trachis with a foreigner,
and nobody knows where he is.

Bitter ache of separation brought on me,
ten months then five, and no news,
bitter childbirth in separation
worried for some awful calamity.
Black trouble may be connected with
this memo he left me.

I keep praying it doesn't mean something horrible.

NURSE: If a slave be permitted, milady?
I've heard you worrying time and again about Herakles...
If I'm not speaking out of my turn, ma'am, you got
a fine lot of sons here, why not Hyllos
go look for his father?

He's coming now. There, hurrying!
If you felt like to tell him,
if....

DAY: See here, son, this slave talks sense,
more than some free folks.

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HYLLOS: What's she say? Lemme hear.

DAY: No credit to you, that you haven't gone to look for your father.

HYL: I've just heard . . . if it's true.

DAY: Heard what? That he's sitting around somewhere or other.

HYL: Farmed out last year to a woman in Lydia.

DAY: He's capable of anything, if . . .

HYL: Oh, I hear he's got out of *that*.

DAY: Do they say he's alive or dead?

HYL: They *say* he's in Euboea, besieging Eurytusville
or on the way to it.

DAY: You know he left some sort of forecast
having to do with that country?

HYL: No, I didn't know that.

DAY: That it would be the end of him, or that when he got through with the job, he would live happy ever after.
It's on the turn of the wheel.
Don't you want to go and work with him?
If he wins we're saved,
if he doesn't we're done for.

HYL: Of course I'll go. I'd have been gone before now
if I had known.
I've never worried very much about him
one way or the other. Luck being with him.
But now I'll go get the facts.

DAY: Well, get going. A bit late, but a good job's worth a bonus.

KHOROS *(accompaniment strings, mainly cellos):*

PHOEBUS, Phoebus, ere thou slay (*Str.* 1)
and lay flaked Night upon her blazing pyre,
Say, ere the last star-shimmer is run:

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Where lies Alkmene's son, apart from me?
Aye, thou art keen, as is the lightning blaze,
Land way, sea ways,
in these some slit hath he
found to escape thy scrutiny?

DAYSAIR is left alone, *(Ant. 1)*
so sorry a bird,
For whom, afore, so many suitors tried.
And shall I ask what thing is heart's desire,
Or how love fall to sleep with tearless eye,
So worn by fear away, of dangerous road,
A manless bride to mourn in vacant room,
Expecting ever the worse,
of dooms to come?

NORTH WIND or South, so bloweth tireless *(Str. 2)*
wave over wave to flood.
Cretan of Cadmus' blood, Orcus' shafts err not.
What home hast 'ou now,
an some God stir not?

PARDON if I reprove thee, Lady, *(Ant. 2)*
To save thee false hopes delayed.
Thinkst thou that man who dies,
Shall from King Chronos take
unvaried happiness?
Nor yet's all pain.

(drums, quietly added to music)

The shifty Night delays not,
Nor fates of men, nor yet rich goods and spoil.
Be swift to enjoy, what thou art swift to lose.
Let not the Queen choose despair.
Hath Zeus no eye (who saith it?)
watching his progeny?

DAY: You've found out, I suppose, and want to help me stop worrying.

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Hope you'll never go through enough to understand how.
One grows up, gets fed. "Don't get sun-burnt."
"Don't get wet in the rain. Keep out of draughts,"
that's a girl's life till she's married.
Gets her assignment at night: something to think about,
that is: worry about her man and the children.
You've seen my load, while it's been going on.
Well, here's another to wail about:
before King Herakles rushed off the last time,
he left an old slab of wood with sign writing on it.
Never could get a word out of him about it before,
for all the rough jobs he went out on,
he just couldn't bear to speak of it,
talked as if he were going to work, not to his funeral.
Now? not a bit of it:
all about my marriage property,
what land each of the children was to get from the entail.
Time to work out in three months,
either he would be dead, or come back and spend
the rest of his life without trouble,
all fixed by the gods, end of Herakles' labours,
as stated
under an old beech-tree in Dodona
where a pair of doves tell you.
Time up,
see how much truth was in it.
I started from a sound sleep, shaking,
in terror I should have to live on
robbed of the best man ever born.

KHO: Hush. Here comes a man with a wreath on.
That means good news

MESSENGER: Queen Daysair,
let me be the first to calm your anxiety.
Alkemene's son is alive, and has won,
and is carrying the spoils to the gods of our country.

DAY: What are you talking about?

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MES: You'll soon see him, the man you want,
crowned with Victory. He's looking splendid.

DAY: You get this from some local bloke, or a foreigner?

MES: There in the summer pastures
Likhas the herald is telling a whole crowd of people.
I came on ahead, thought I might get
a tip for the news.

DAY: Why doesn't he come himself, if there's anything to it?

MES: He can't for the crowd, ma'am.
They're all jammed round him
wanting the details.
He can't move a step. They want it.
But you'll see him here pretty soon.

DAY: Zeus in the long grass of Oeta,
joy hast Thou given me with its season.

Tune up, you there, you women, inside
and out here.
I had given up hope.
Never thought I would see it.
Let's sing and be happy.

KHOROS: APOLLO
and Artemis, analolu
Artemis,
Analolu,
Sun-bright Apollo, Saviour Apollo,
analolu,
Artemis,
Sylvan Artemis,
Swift-arrowed Artemis, analolu
By the hearth-stone
brides to be
Shout in male company:
APOLLO EUPHARETRON.
Sylvan Artemis,
torch-lit Artemis

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With thy Ortygian girls,
Analolu
Artemis,
Io Zagreus,
Join now, join with us
when the great stag is slain,
Lord of hearts, Artemis,
Ivied Zagreus,
Analolu,
Dancing maid and man,
Lady or Bacchanal
dancing toe to toe
By night,
By light shall show
analolu
Paian.

DAY: Yes, my dear girls, I make out the crowd
and finally and at last and at leisure
the herald, to be received,
and,
if his news is good,
welcomed.

LIKHAS: That it is, Milady,
and worth hearing,
and paying for.

DAY: Is Herakles alive?

LIKH: Sound in wind and limb, mind and body.

DAY: Where? In Greece or in some damn foreign desert?

LIKH: On the cliff of Euboea,
setting up altars to Zeus Kaenean.

DAY: A vow, or to stave off evil?

LIKH: A vow, made when he went to conquer
these women's country.

DAY: Good God! What are these poor devils?
Where do they come from?

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LIKH: These are the ones he picked for the gods (and himself)
when he sacked Eurytus.

DAY: And he's been waiting all this time
to conquer a city?

LIKH: No, most of the time he was in Lydia,
that's what he says, sold into bondage,
and you can't blame it on anyone except Zeus.
Says he was in servitude to the barbarian Omphale
(that's what he says).
So disgusted he swore to get back at the man who'd
double-crossed him;
chuck him and his whole house into slavery,
wife, child and the lot of 'em.
Swore in foreign troops and went to Eurytus' place
as he blamed it all on Eurytus.
Well, he was drunk, and he killed a man,
threw him off a cliff, and was punished.
Zeus wouldn't stand it,
and Herakles blamed it on 'Rytus
who had insulted him
and had him thrown out of the dining hall,
which was how he came to be on the cliff
up at Tirunth
when Iphytz was there hunting lost horses,
and he killed him, and so on,
and Zeus wouldn't stand it.
So when he'd done his time, he got a gang together
and sacked 'Rytus' city.
These are the captives.
That's what comes of big talk.
Said Herakles couldn't shoot as well as his kids, 'Rytus's.
Hell's full of big talkers.
He'll be along as soon as he's finished
the celebration. All very fine—
Sacrifice, captives.
C'est très beau.

KHO: Yes, isn't it, Your Majesty.
Everything will now be all right.

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DAY: If it lasts, yes. Looks all right, why can't I feel easy about it?
My luck runs with his. I wonder.
I'm sorry for these poor girls, in a strange country,
orphans, slaves,
I hope no child of mine ever—
or that I don't live to see it.

(*to* IOLE)

You look as if you were taking it worse
than any of the others.
Girl, wife, young; no, you can't have been
married yet. And good family.

Who is she, Likhas?
I'm sorrier for her than for the rest of them.
She seems to feel it.

LIKH: How do I know? She might be top drawer,
why ask me?

DAY: Royal? Had Eurytus a daughter?

LIKH: I dunno. I haven't asked her.

DAY: Didn't anyone tell you?

LIKH: I had plenty else to do, without asking that kind of questions.

DAY (*to* IOLE):
Well then, you tell me.
What's happened? Who are you?

LIKH: It'll be a change if she does,
hasn't uttered a pip-squeak
since she came down from the windy country.
Tears, tears, tears,
but it's excusable,
she's had pretty bad luck.

DAY: Let her alone, let her go in,
I don't want to add to her troubles,
she's had enough.

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Everybody in!
Have to hurry to get things in order.

[*Exeunt Likhas and captives.*]

MESSENGER: 'Arf a mo' Ma'am! Better find out
what you're taking in there. I know
a bit more about that.

DAY: What's this? What are you stopping me for?

MES: Jus' lis'en a bit,
if what I told you before was worth hearing . . .

DAY: Shall I call 'em back?

MES: We're enough. There's enough of us here.

DAY: They're all gone. Don't talk riddles.

MES: That fellow was lying, one time or the other,
one heck of a messenger!

DAY: Put it on the line, what do you know?
Get it out clearly.

MES: All started when he had a letch for the girl, and when her pro-eh-Genitor 'Rytus wouldn't let him put her to bed on the Q.T.
Wasn't about Iphytz or Omphale
he sacked the town, and killed 'Rytus to get her.
He's not bringin' her here as a slave. Too het up.
So I thought I would be telling Your Majesty,
this is what Likhas was saying,
and plenty of Trachinians heard him.
I'm sorry to worry you. But the facts . . .

DAY: What have I done, what have I done!
Just a nobody, and he took oath that she was.
What a mess.

MES: She's somebody all right, all right.
Name's Iole, and 'Rytus her father.
And Likhas hadn't found that out
'cause he hadn't troubled to ask her.

KHO: To hell with all double-crossers,
they are the last of all dirtiness.

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DAY: What shall . . . what shall . . . my dear girls,
what, what . . . . .

MES: You might start by questioning Likhas,
scare the lights out of him, and he might tell you.

DAY: I'll do that. You're talking sense.

MES: Want me to go, or . . ?

DAY: You stay here. There he comes, without being asked.

LIKH: What do you want me to tell Herakles, Madam?
I'm leaving.

DAY: Not in quite such a hurry. You were
in no hurry to get here.
Let's have a little conversation.

LIKH: Yours to command, Ma'am.

DAY: Have you any respect for the truth?

LIKH: So help me God. Nothing but . . .

DAY: Who was that woman you brought here?

LIKH: I don't know about her family, she comes from Euboea.

MES: Look at here. You know who this is?

LIKH: Who are you?

MES: Don't mind that.
Answer my question, if you've got sense enough.

LIKH: Her most Gracious Majesty, Queen of Herakles,
Daughter of Oineus, Daysair.

MES: Right for once! She's your Queen.

LIKH: To whom my most faithful service . . .

MES: Service, duty, yes duty, my dicky-bird
and if you don't . . .

LIKH: What's this screw-ball?
If I don't . . . .

MES: Do your duty, do you get that?
It sounds fairly clear.

LIKH: Silly to stop for this nonsense, I'm off.

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MES: One little question.

LIKH: Get on with it. Not the quiet type, are you?

MES: That girl, you know which one,
you took into the house?

LIKH: What about her?

MES: Don't know her by sight, eh, you don't?
and you said she was 'Rytus's daughter,
the Princess Iole.

LIKH: Nobody ever heard me say anything of the sort.

MES: Oh yes they did. Plenty of us, us Trachinians,
a whole agora heard it.

LIKH: Just talk, a mere rumour.

MES: Just an opinion? eh? rumour? eh?
And you swore pink they were bringing her
to be Herakles' wife.

LIKH: Wife? Good God, Your dear Majesty,
who is this outsider?

MES: Just somebody heard you talking.
Not the Lydian army, and its queen.
He sacked a whole town cause he liked the look in her eyes. Took a fancy.

LIKH: Beg to differ, Your Majesty. No use
bothering with this screw-ball.

DAY: THUNDER of God! By the black vale of Oeta,
don't weasel to me.
And
besides
you're not going to tell it to a bad woman,
or to one who doesn't know that men
just naturally don't want the same thing all the time.
How's any slugger going to stop Love with his hands?
That's a nice way to think of it?
He starts off the gods, as he fancies.
Me, am I going to win at it?

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Be perfectly silly to blame the man while he's crazy,
or the girl they're blaming.
No shame to me . . . . no harm.
It's not that at all. BUT . . . .
if he taught you to lie,
the lesson you learned is
not
a nice one.
And if you taught yourself to lie,
thinking some good would come of it,
you saw cross-eyed.
You come out with the truth, the whole
truth. Now.
It's no compliment to call a free man a liar,
when a free man is called a liar it's no pretty compliment,
and it'll all come out anyhow,
how are you going to hide it?
Plenty of people heard you, and will certainly tell me.
And if you think . . . not nice to be in terror of me . . .
not to find out, would pain me, mightn't it?
And what's so awful to know?
That man Herakles! hasn't he
had plenty of others on me?
Ever driven me to nag him, or blame him?
And if he was overflowing with passion for her,
will I but pity her greatly, and the more.
Her looks have ruin'd her life,
and ruin'd the land of her fathers,
not knowing, wretched,
didn't know what it was all about.
All this gone under the wind.
I'm telling you: do dirt to others but . . . .
Don't weasel to me.

KHO: Better do as she says. She won't blame you, in the long run,
and I will be grateful.

LIKH: Oh Majesty, Your Dear Majesty, I see you understand
that human beings are human,
I'll tell the truth, I won't hold back on you.

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It's as that chap there says it was.
Herakles was hit by a tremendous passion,
it swept over him,
and he seized all Oechalia
and gave it over to pillage, her fatherland,
but I'll say this much for him,
he never denied it, or told me to conceal it.
It was me, your Majesty, who was afraid it would pain you,
me who did wrong, eh, if, eh, you
think it was wrong of me,
and now you know all of it, for his sake
and for your sake, both of your sakes together,
do put up with the girl.
He beat all the champions into subjection
and now Eros throws him down with all his inferiors.

DAY: Yes, We think that's what's to be done
and just that way.
This imported trouble won't be got rid of
by a losing fight versus the gods.
Let's go in, and I'll get you something for Herakles
and a note to take with it.
Got to send him something suitable, in return.
Wouldn't be right for you to go back
without something, having come with all this.

KHOROS: KUPRIS bears trophies away. (*Str.*)
Kronos' Son, Dis and Poseidon,
There is no one
shaker unshaken.
Into dust go they all.
Neath Her they must
give way.

TWO gods fought for a girl, (*Ant.*)
Battle and dust!
Might of a River with horns
crashing.
Four bulls together
Shall no man tether,

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Akheloös neither,
lashing through Oneudai.
As bow is bent
the Theban Cub,
Bacchus' own, spiked is his club,
HE is God's Son.
Hurled to one bed,
Might of waters like a charge of bulls crashing.
Get a dowsing rod.
Kupris decides
To whom brides
fall.

ROCK and wrack,
Horns into back,
Slug, grunt and groan,
Grip through to bone.
Crash and thud
Bows against blood
Grip and grind
Bull's head and horn.
BUT the wide-eyed girl on the hill,
Out of it all,
frail,
Who shall have her?
To stave her and prove her,
Cowless calf lost,
Hurtled away,
prized for a day?

[*Music in this Khoros fifes, kettle drums, oboes, etc., with flute solo or clarinet.*]

DAY *(reenters)*: Well, my dears,
while that outsider is inside
chatting with the little victims of bow and spear
before he pushes off,
let's figure out how we are to manage this cohabitation with
this virgin who isn't one any longer,
'cause she's been yoked.

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Too much cargo, contraband,
but keep my mind afloat somehow.
"Double yoke
Under one cloak",
and I said he was so kind and dependable.
What I get for keeping house
all this time.
But I can't stay mad at him long,
I know what's got into him,
And yet . . .
the two of us,
My husband, her man, the new girl's man,
and she's young.
And:
"E'en from fond eyes, olde flowers are cast away."
And
it's not nice for a woman to be too crotchety,
the ones with nice minds are not peevish.
And
may be there's a way out.
Nessus, that old ruffian with hair on his chest,
long ago, I was a green girl then,
and he gave me a little present
which I've kept stored away in a brass pot
all this time.
He was dying from loss of blood
there at the ferry over Evenus
where it's too deep to ford.
And he had me up on his shoulders
in mid passage
and got too fresh with his hands.
I let out a shriek, and: WHIZZ ! !
as he turned
Zeuson had an arrow into his lung up to the feathers.
Before he passed out he said:
"As you're old Oineus' daughter,
I'll give you what I've earned by all this ferrying.
Scrape the drying blood from my wound
where the Hydra's blood tipped that arrow,
Lernaean Hydra,

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and you'll have a love charm so strong
that Herakles will never look at another woman
or want her more than you."

Well, my dears, I been thinking 'bout that,
I've kept the stuff since his death
carefully in a cool dark place,
and I've swobbed this jacket with it,
just as the Centaur told me,
not like a philtre,
I don't believe it's too great a risk.

Deal with that young woman somehow,
unless you think I am foolish.

KHO: Don't seem a bad idea, if
you think it will work.

DAY: No absolute guarantee, of course,
but you'll never tell till you try.

KHO: Nope, no proof without data,
no proof without experiment.

DAY: There he is. Be gone soon,
keep quiet about this for a bit,
what they don't know won't hurt us.
You can get away with a good deal in the dark.

LIKH: I have considerably overstayed my leave, Madame d'Oineus.
Tell me, please, just what I've to do.

DAY: While you've been in there talking to the girls,
I've wrapped up this present for Herakles,
a jacket I made him myself,
nobody else is to put it on first,
he's not to leave it in the sun
or near the fire inside the holy hedge
until he stand before the gods at the altar
for killing the bulls.
I vowed that if I should ever see him
safe home, or hear he had come,
I would make him a proper chiton
to wear when he sacrificed in the god's presence.

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The packet is sealed with my signet
which he will recognize.
Now you may go, and
remember a messenger's first job is
to do what he's told, not more, not less,
but just what he is told.
Do that, and we'll both be grateful.

LIKH: Properly trained in Hermes' messenger-service, Ma'am,
say I'm not, if I slip up on this
or don't take him the box, as is,
and your message exactly.

DAY: Then go. You know how things are going inside.

LIKH: Yes. I'll say: everything under control.

DAY: And that I'm being nice to the visitor,
you've seen that.

LIKH: And I was most awfully surprised
and cheered by it.

DAY *(reveuse)*: Anything more? No.
Mustn't say how much I want him
until I know he's going to want me.

KHOROS: SAFE the port, rocky the narrows, *(Str. 1)*
Streams warm to a glaze on Oeta's hill,
Malis' pool and Dian's beach
Neath her golden-shafted arrows
Ye who live here and disdeign
All greek towns less than the Pelean,

(fifes, flute & grosse caisse)

SOON shall hear the skirl and din *(Ant.1)*
Of flutes' loud cackle shrill return,
Dear to Holy Muses as
Phoebus' lyre ever was. From the valours of his wars
Comes now the God, Alkmene's son
Bearing battle booty home.

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(clarinette, bassoon)

TWELVE moons passing, *(Str. 2)*
night long, and day.
Exile, exile
Knowing never, to come? to stay?
Tears, tears, till grief
Hath wrecked her heart away,
Ere mad Mars should end him
his working day.

(cello, low register)

TO PORT, to port. *(Ant. 2)*
Boat is still now;
The many oars move not.
By island shrine ere he come to the town
Day long, day long
If the charm of the gown prove not?
'Tis dipped, aye in the unguent
drenched through it, in every fold.
Told, told,
in all as she had been told.

[DAYSAIR *enters now in the tragic mask.*]

DAY: Something's gone wrong, my dears, awfully,
terribly wrong, and I'm scared.

KHO: Why, Daysair Oineus, what do you mean?

DAY: I don't know, I dunno, I hoped
and I don't hope.
Something awful will come of it.

KHO: You don't mean your present to Herakles?

DAY: Exactly. People oughtn't to rush into
what they don't understand.

KHO: Tell us what you're afraid of.

DAY: Something too creepy's just happened.
That thick wad of white sheep's wool
that I used to daub the jacket, just disappeared.
Nobody touched it. Seemed to corrode of itself.
Ate itself up, there on the floor-stones.

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When that brute of a Centaur
was in agony from the arrow in his lung,
he told me—and I can remember it
as if it were engraved on a brass plate—
and I did just what he told me: kept it cool,
away from the fire and sunlight, in a cupboard
until time to use it, which I did inside,
and nobody saw me take it out of the kettle
with wool I'd pulled out of a fleece from our own sheep
and put it inside the box that you saw.

But just now, something you wouldn't believe,
perfectly inexplicable, I found it all flaming
there in the sunlight. It had got warm
and just crumbled away, like sawdust
where somebody had been sawing a board,
but mixed up with bubbles
like the fat scum that slops over from the wine-press.
I'm out of my mind with worry and misery.
I've done something awful.
Why should that dying brute want to do me a favour?
He was dying on my account.
Wanted to hit back at his killer.
And I've found out what he was up to,
and it's too late.
I'm to murder him, damn it, fate.
I know that arrow hurt even Chiron
and he was a demigod—
black blood from the death arrow,
would kill any wild animal.
If he dies, if he's caught,
I'll die too.
No decent woman would live after that horror.

KHO: Don't give up yet.
There's danger. But it mayn't necessarily happen.

DAY: There's no hope for those who have done wrong.

KHO: But if you didn't mean it, they won't
blame you as much as all that.

DAY: Talk that way if you're not involved,
not if you've got the weight of it on you.

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KHO: Better wait to hear what your son's got to say.
There he is to tell you, himself;
he went to look for his father.

HYL: Damn you, I wish you were dead,
or no mother, anyhow, or at any rate not mine.

DAY: What's got into you, son,
why do . . .

HYL: You've murdered your man, my father,
and you did it today.

DAY: What a thing to say. Oh, oh.

HYL: Well you've done it, and finished it,
and what's done can't be undone.

DAY: How can you say this! Me! The most loathsome crime known?

HYL: I saw it myself, the way he suffered.
This is no idle rumour.

DAY: Where did you find him? You were with him?

HYL: You'll hear it. You've got to hear all of it.
He sacked Eurytus' city,
you've heard of that place,
and was coming home with the spoils,
at the top headland of Euboea
where the sea swashes in on both sides,
at Kenaion, facing the North.
He orientated the altars, to the gods,
our own.
Fixed the lay-out, cutting the leaves.
And I was glad to get the first sight of him
starting to kill all those bulls.
Then along comes Likhas the family herald
with that present, that marvelous peplon.
And he put it on, like as you'd said,
and started on the first dozen bulls,
going on to kill the whole hundred, hecatomb.
And the poor devil, at the start,
was so cheerful about it,
seemed pleased with his vestments.

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Made the prayer, but
as the flame went up from the Holy Orgy,
bloody and from the fat oak logs,
sweat broke from his skin,
the shirt stuck to him, like it was glued,
shrinking in on all of his joints
as if made by someone who knew how to do it.
Gnawing into his bones, it seemed to be,
dirty snake poison gave him convulsions,
seemed like it was biting with hate.
And he howled for the miserable Likhas
who wasn't guilty. You were.
To know who'd hatched the shirt trick.
And Likhas said he had brought it as it was
fixed up and given him.

Then the stuff got another worse grip on him
and he grabbed Likhas by the foot,
twisting his ankle,
and threw him out off onto a boulder
that stuck up out of the breakers.
Hair! Brains came out of the skull
mixed with blood.
The whole crowd groaned:
one dead, another stark raving.
Nobody dared to come near him. There he was
on the ground roaring, or groaning when
he reared part way up, and the rocks echoing
from Locris to Euboea,
between the crags and the sea-cliffs.
Till he was clean worn out, writhing on the ground,
moaning, and cursing his marriage bed,
cursing you, and that he'd been fool enough
to get you from Oineus
to ruin his life. The one woman.

Then with his eyes screwed up from the smoke
that came out of him
and tears running down, he caught sight of me
and called for me:
"Don't try to keep out of this,
even if you have to die with me.

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Get me out of here
to somewhere, anywhere, where no one can see me.
Get me out of here, quick. I don't want to die here."
That's what he told me.

So we put him into the hollow of the boat
and brought him to the mainland,
hardly any more noise coming out of him
but still in convulsions.
You'll see him pretty soon,
living or dead.

That, my dear mother, is what you have thought up
to do to my father,
Hell take you, and the Furies, and do you right.
Justice, eh, Justice, if . . .
lot of justice you had for me!
You spewed it out when you killed
the best man on earth,
what you see henceforth will be of a different kind.

[DAYSAIR *exit.*]

KHO: Why does she go so quietly?
Has she no answer?

HYL: Let her go. And a nice wind take her far enough
. . . out of sight,
and another label to keep up her maternal swank,
fine mother she is, let her de-part
in peace . . .
and get some of the pleasure she has given my father.

KHOROS *(low cello merely sustaining the voice)*:

OYEZ: *(Str. 1)*
Things foretold and forecast:
Toil and moil.
God's Son from turmoil shall
—when twelve seed-crops be past—
be loosed with the last,
his own.
Twining together, godword found good,

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Spoken of old,
as the wind blew, truth's in the flood.
We and his brood see in swift combine,
here and at last that:
Amid the dead is no servitude
nor do they labour.

(contrabassi & drums muffled)

LO, beneath deadly cloud *(Ant. 1)*
Fate and the Centaur's curse, black venom spread,
Dank Hydra's blood
Boils now through every vein, goad after goad
from spotted snake to pierce the holy side,
nor shall he last to see a new day's light,
Black shaggy night descends
as Nessus bade.

WHAT MOURNFUL case *(Str. 2)*
who feared great ills to come,
New haste in mating threatening her home,
Who hark'd to reason in a foreign voice
Entangling her in ravage out of choice.
Tears green the cheek with bright dews pouring down;
Who mourns apart, alone
Oncoming swiftness in o'erlowering fate
To show what wreck is nested in deceit.

LET the tears flow. *(Ant. 2)*
Ne'er had bright Herakles in his shining
Need of pity till now
whom fell disease burns out.
How swift on Oechal's height
to take a bride.
Black pointed shaft that shielded her in flight,
Attest
That
Kupris stood by and never said a word,
Who now flares here the contriver
manifest . . .
and indifferent.

[*The dea ex machina, hidden behind a gray gauze in her niche, is lit up strongly so that the gauze is transparent. The apparition*

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is fairly sudden, the fade-out slightly slower: the audience is almost in doubt that she has appeared.]

½ KHO: Am I cracked, or did I hear someone weeping?
In the hall?
Did you hear it?

2ND ½ KHO: Not a muttering, but someone in trouble,
wailing,
started again inside there.

[*Enter* NURSE.]

½ KHO: Look,
look at the old woman's face. Something awful,
it's all twisted up.

NUR: Children, children,
no end to the troubles from sending
that present to Herakles.

KHO: More, you mean more?

NUR: She's gone . . . . . Daysair,
The last road of all roads
. . . without walking.

KHO: What! Dead?

NUR: That's all. You heard me.

KHO: You mean the poor girl is dead?

NUR: Yes, for the second time. Yes.

KHO: Poor thing. How awful. But how . . .
How is she dead?

NUR: In the most violent . . .

KHO: But how, say how, woman.
How did it happen?

NUR: Did it herself,
ripped herself open.

KHO: But she crazy? What did she do it with?
How did she do it all by herself?
Dying one after another.

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NUR: Got hold of a sword, a roaring big sword.
And a sharp one.

KHO: But did you see it, you fool,
see this outrage?

NUR: Saw it. I wasn't far off.

KHO: What? How? Go on and tell us.

NUR: Did it herself. With her hands.

KHO: But what do you mean?

NUR: Plain fact. What you can see for yourself.

KHO: That new girl's doin' it.
I'll say she's effective.
Bride is she, and a fury. Holy Erinyes!

NUR: And then some. You'd feel it more
if you'd seen it near to.

KHO: But has a woman got the strength in her hands?
And to stand it?

NUR: Terrible, you can believe me. She came in alone
and saw the boy in the hall preparing the hearse-litter
to fetch back his father.
She hid herself down back of the altar,
sank down there groaning because her brood had deserted her.

Then pitifully stroking[2] the things she had used before,
went wandering through the best rooms—
didn't know I could see her, from a sort of kink in the wall—
drawing her hands over the things she was used to.

Then came on one of the maids whom she liked,
and with the look of doom on her
cried to her daemon, that she was more childless
than any woman. Then stopped. And of a sudden
ran into Herakles' bed room, and threw her cloak
onto Herakles' bed, spread it out like a coverpane,
then threw herself onto it and lay there quiet

[2]2000 years later the Minoru had developed a technique which permitted the direct presentation of such shades by symbolic gesture. In Sophokles' time it had to be left to narration.

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for a moment as if asleep.
Choking with tears, then: "Bride's-bed,
good-bye my bride's-bed, never again
folded together!"

And she ripped the dress all off her left side
and the gold clasp with it.

I ran for Hyllos, but she was too quick,
she had jammed a sword side-ways
through her liver into the heart, when we got there,
two-edged.

The boy screamed
and blamed himself for having driven her to it.
Father, mother, all in one day.
He'd found out that she'd only done what
that animal told her,
hadn't meant any harm.
Too pitiful he was. Sobbing and holding her in his arms.

You can't count on anything for tomorrow,
got to wait till today is over.

KHOROS (*declaimed*): *(Str. 1)*

TORN between griefs, which grief shall I lament,
which first? Which last, in heavy argument?
One wretchedness to me in double load.

DEATH'S in the house, *(Ant. 1)*
and death comes by the road.

(sung) *(Str. 2)*

THAT WIND might bear away my grief and me,
Sprung from the hearth-stone, let it bear me away.
God's Son is dead,
that was so brave and strong,
And I am craven to behold such death
Swift on the eye,
Pain hard to uproot,
and this so vast
A splendour of ruin.

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THAT NOW is here. *(Ant. 2)*
As Progne shrill upon the weeping air,
'tis no great sound.
These strangers lift him home,
with shuffling feet, and love that keeps them still.
The great weight silent
for no man can say
If sleep but feign
or Death reign instantly.

HERAKLES (*in the mask of divine agony*):

Holy Kanea, where they build holy altars,
done yourself proud, you have,
nice return for a sacrifice:
messing me up.
I could have done without these advantages
And the spectacle of madness in flower,
incurable, oh yes.
Get some one to make a song for it,
Or some chiropractor to cure it.
A dirty pest,
take God a'mighty to cure it and
I'd be surprised to see Him
coming this far . . .

(to the others)

Ahj!
Get away,
let me lie quiet, for the last time
aaah. What you doin' trying to turn me over,
let me alone. Blast it.
Bloody crime to start it again,
sticks to me.
It's coming back.
You greeks are the dirtiest,
damn you, if you are greeks at all,
where do you come from?
What I've done on sea, and clearing out thickets,

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killing wild animals.
And now I'm in torture, no one to finish it off
with fire, or with a knife,
or do ANYthing useful,
or even let me alone.

If only someone would lop my head off
and get me out of this loathsome existence,
Aaahj.

OLD MAN: Here, you're his son, and I ain't strong enough
to lift him.
Give a hand,
You could do more for him than I can.

HYL: Right, but he's passed out from pain.
Inside or out here,
he's dying on me.
God's will.

HER: Boy, where are you? Hoist me up
and hang on. What rotten luck!
It keeps jumping. This beastly pain,
taken all the fight out of me.
I can't get at it.

Pallas Athene! there goes that ache again.
Oooh boy, have some pity on the father that made you,
pull out something with an edge on it,
and get it in here

(with gesture; the exact spot)

(low cellos, contrabassi, muffled drum in gaps between the phrases)

and get it in here
under my collar bone.
Your mother's to blame for this.

Damn'd atheist, that's what she is.
And I wish her the same.

(pause, then sotto voce)

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Brother of God, Sweet Hell, be decent.
Let me lie down and rest.
Swift-feathered Death, that are the end of shame.

KHO: Scares me to hear him.
And when you think what he was.

HER: Many and hot, and that's not just talking,
my own hands, and my own back doing the dirty work.
But God's bitch never put one like this over on me,
nor that grump Rustheus either.
And now Miss Oineus
with her pretty little shifty eyes
m'la calata,
has done me to beat all the furies,
got me into a snarl, clamped this net onto me
and she wove it.
It sticks to my sides and
has gnawed through to my furtherest in'nards.
And now it's stopped the green blood,
got into the lungs and dries up the tubes along with them,
tears up all the rest of me.
Holds me down, like in fetters. I can't explain it.
No gang of plainsmen with spears,
no army of giants come up out of the earth,
no wild beast was strong enough. Nor Greeks,
nor foreigners whose countries I had cleaned up,
but a pindling female did it,
not even a man with balls.
Alone and without a sword.

Boy, you start showing whose son you are. I.e. mine,
and as for the highly revered title to motherhood,
you get that producer out of her house
and hand her over to me. We'll see whether
you feel worse watching me rot or
seeing her cut up and brought to justice.

Go, pick up your courage. Get going and
have mercy on me
or pity, that's it: pity. Me blubbering like a flapper,
no man ever saw me taken like this before

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or said I groaned over my troubles,
now I find out I'm a sissy. Come here. Nearer,
see what your father is brought to.

(he throws off the sheet covering him)

Without the wrappings,
look at it, all of you,
ever see a body in this condition?
Gosh!
That's a death-rattle again. Disgraceful.
Got me here on the side again, eating through me.
Can't seem to get rid of it.
Lord of Hell, take me.
Thundering Lord God, if you've got a crash-rattle,
throw it.
God our father of Thunder.
There it is gnawing again,
budding, blossoming.
OH my hand, my hands,
back, chest, my lovely arms,
what you used to be. That lion that was killing off
the Newman cattle-men, the Hydra in Lerna
and those unsociable bardots, half man and half horse,
the whole gang of them all together
arrogant, lawless, surpassing strong,
and the Eurymanthian animal, and that three-headed pup
from Hell down under, the Echidna's nursling
brought up by an out-size viper,
and the dragon-guard of the golden apples
at the end of the world.
And a great lot of other work,
and nobody took any prizes away from me.
No joints, no strength in 'em,
all torn to pieces.
This blind calamity,
and my mother was a notable woman
and my father in heaven, Zeus, mid the stars.
That's what they say.

But I tell you this much. I can't even crawl,
but bring her here and I'll learn her,

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I'll make her a lesson: Alive or dead how I
pay people for dirty work.

KHO: Poor Greece, you can see troubles coming
if you let such a man down.

HYL: You seem to expect me to answer.
You're quiet, as if expecting an answer.
Now if I may ask you for justice,
and tell you how useless it is to want to break her.

HER: Say what you've got to say, and get it over with.
I'm too sick to be pestered with double-talk and nuances.

HYL: It's about mother's mistake.
What's happened. She didn't mean it.

HER: Well of all the dirtiest . . .
Your bloody murdering mother
and you dare to mention her
in my earshot!

HYL: It's about mother's mistake.

HER: No, I dare say past crimes ought to be—

HYL: And you'll mention what's happened today.

HER: Speak up. But be careful,
it won't show your breeding.

HYL: Well, she's dead. Just been killed.

HER: By whom?
That's a bad sign.

HYL: She did it.

HER: And cheated me out of the chance.

HYL: If you knew all the facts, you'd quit being angry.

HER: Thazza good tough start. Give.

HYL: She just didn't mean any harm. She meant well.

HER: You louse! Meant well by killing your father?

HYL: An aphrodisiac. Thought it would

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get you back, and went wrong, when she
saw the new wife in the house.

HER: The Trachinians got witch-doctors that good?

HYL: Nessus told her a long time ago
that the philtre would start that sort of letch.

HER: Misery. I'm going out
and my light's gone.
The black out!
I understand perfectly well
where things have got to . . . Go, son,
call all my seed and their kindred,
and Alkmene, ill-starred for the empty name
of the Godhead, my mother,
so they can get my last report
of the oracles, as I know them.

HYL: Your mother is at Tiryns out of reach
and took some of the children with her.
Others are in Thebes-burg, I'll round up
the near ones, if that's O.K.,
and they'll do what you tell them.

HER: Listen first, and show what you're made of,
my stock. My father told me long ago
that no living man should kill me,
but that someone from hell would, and
that brute of a Centaur has done it.
The dead beast kills the living me.
And that fits another odd forecast
breathed out at the Selloi's oak—
Those fellows rough it,
sleep on the ground, up in the hills there.
I heard it and wrote it down
under my Father's tree.
Time lives, and it's going on now.
I am released from trouble.

I thought it meant life in comfort.
It doesn't. It means that I die.
For amid the dead there is no work in service.
Come at it that way, my boy, what

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SPLENDOUR,
IT ALL COHERES.[3]

[He turns his face from the audience, then sits erect, facing them without the mask of agony; the revealed make-up is that of solar serenity. The hair golden and as electrified as possible.]

But you must help me
and don't make me lose my temper,
don't dither, and don't ask me why.
This is the great rule: Filial Obedience.

HYL: I will obey.

HER *(extending his hand)*: Put her there.

HYL: I'll do it. I don't need to swear.

HER: Put it there.

HYL *(complying)*: What am I swearing to?

HER: Repeat: "By the head of Zeus,"
you will do what I tell you to.

HYL: I swear, so help me God.

HER: "And God damn all perjurers."

HYL: I'll keep it anyhow.

(adds after almost imperceptible pause)

And God DAMN all perjurers.

HER: You know the highest peak of Zeus' hill in Oeta?

HYL: Sacrificed there quite often.

HER: You must get this carcass up there,
by hand, with as many friends as you like.
And cut a lot of wood from deep-rooted oaks
and from wild olive (male trees)
lopped off the same way.
Get it going with the bright flame of a pine torch.

[3]This is the key phrase, for which the play exists, as in the *Elektra:* "Need we add cowardice to all the rest of these ills?" Or the: "T'as inventé la justice" in Cocteau's *Antigone.* And, later: "Tutto quello che è accaduto, doveva accadere." At least one sensitive hellenist who has shown great care for Sophokles' words, has failed to grasp the main form of the play, either here or in the first chorus, and how snugly each segment of the work fits into its box.

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And put me onto the pyre.
Don't blubber. Show that you are my son
or you'll have my ghost heavy on you
from below there,
forever.

HYL: But father . . .
have I got all this straight?

HER: Got your orders. Do 'em,
or change your name.

HYL: Good lord, you want me to be a murderer
and a parricide?

HER: No, a physician,
the only one who can heal.

HYL: But how come, if I burn it?

HER: If you are afraid of that,
do the rest.

HYL: I don't mind carrying you up there.

HER: And build the pyre? As I tell you to do?

HYL: So long as I don't have to light it
with my own hands,
I'll do my bit.

HER: And another little job
that won't take long
after the big one.

HYL: I don't care what size it is. It'll get done.

HER: You know that kid of Eurytus's?

HYL: Iole? I guess you mean Iole.

HER: Ezakly.
When I am dead, if you revere your agreement,
remember it and marry the girl.
Don't disobey me.
She has lain beside me. No other man
but you is to have her.
You agree to the greater, don't jib at the less.

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HYL: But I'd have to be possessed of a devil to do it.
Better die with you. She caused mother's death
and your torture. She's our worst enemy.

HER: The fellow doesn't seem to want to carry out
his dad's last request.
God's worst curse falls on a disobedient son.

HYL: The delirium's coming back.

HER: Yes, because you're stirring it up.

HYL: What *am* I to do, in this mess?

HER: Start by hearing straight.
What I'm telling you,
the dad that made you.

HYL: Have you got to teach me crime?

HER: It is no crime to gladden a father's heart.

HYL: If you order me to, is that legal?
Perfectly all right?

HER: I call the gods to witness.

HYL: Then I'll go ahead. If it's set before the gods
that way, I can't be blamed for obeying you.

HER: Fine. At last, and get going.
Get me onto that fire, before this pain
starts again. Hey, you there, hoist me up
for the last trouble.
The last rest.

HYL: Nothing to stop us now. You're the driver.

HER: Come ere the pain awake,
O stubborn mind.

(*catches sight of* HYLLOS' *face and breaks off with*)

And put some cement in your face,
reinforced concrete, make a cheerful finish
even if you don't want to.

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HYL: Hoist him up, fellows.
And for me a great tolerance,
matching the gods' great unreason.
They see the things being done,
calamities looked at,
sons to honour their fathers,
and of what is to come, nothing is seen. Gods!
Our present miseries, their shame. And of all men
none has so borne, nor ever shall again.

And now ladies, let you go home.
Today we have seen strange deaths,
wrecks many, such as have not been suffered before.
And all of this is from Zeus.

[*Exeunt: The girls left,* HYLLOS *and bearers right.*]

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PETER H. LEE

Old Korean Poems[1]

WIFE OF KWANGDOK
(c. 661-681)

PRAYER TO AMITABHA

She was a devout Buddhist and carried on a married life with Kwangdok. After his death, Omjang, one of his friends, desired to lodge in her house. One day, Omjang, moved by a malicious intention, proposed misconduct. She rebuked him and further admonished him that it would be hopeless for him to enter Paradise (Sukhavati). Overwhelmed with shame, he went to his master, confessed his sin, and was supposed to have attained a promised land. The song seems to sing of her ordinary religious life:

O Moon,
Go to the West, and
Pray to Amitabha,
And tell

That there is one who
Adores the judicial throne, and
Longs for the Pure Land,
Praying before him with folded hands.

Can the forty-eight supplications be met
If this flesh remains unannihilated?

---

[1]These poems were called by historians *Hyangga*, a general term covering in particular the poems written from the beginning of Silla (an ancient Korean kingdom, 57 B.C.—935 A.D.) to the end of the 10th Century. The texts of the poems are preserved in *The Antiquities of Three Kingdoms* (first published in 1279). This is the first time these poems are translated into English, partly because of the difficulty of deciphering old Korean, which is quite different from the modern. The romanization of Korean names follows the system advocated in "Romanization of the Korean Language" by McCune and Reischauer, in *Transactions of the Korean Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Seoul 1938).

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MASTER CH'UNGDAM
(c. 742-765)

STATESMANSHIP

On the third day of the third moon of the year 765, King Kyongdok, standing on the tower of the front main gate and looking about at his subjects, asked that a virtuous priest be brought before him. The first priest brought in was rejected by the King, but the second was welcomed by him with a smile. To the King's question, this priest replied that he was accustomed to go with tea to South Mountain on every third day of the third moon, and every ninth day of the ninth moon, to pray to Buddha Elect. He was just on his way home from the Mountain. Since the King had heard of his reputation as a poet, he asked him to compose a poem. The poem goes:

King is the father, and
Ministers are mothers who love.
Subjects are taken for foolish children;
For only they receive what love brings.

Populace is slow, often lives idly.
But once feed them love, and they thrive—
No one will desert familiar land.
This is the way to govern the country.

Peace and prosperity will prevail if each,
King, minister, subject, live as he should.

ODE TO KNIGHT KILBO

Knight Kilbo, a member of the "Hwarang", the leaders of the knights in Silla, was one of the friends of Master Ch'ungdam, well-known poet in the 8th century. This poem was known for its noble spirit and intense emotion, and the King himself was supposed to have praised it highly. Unlike the other poems, this has no introductory note by the compiler.

The moon that pushes her way
Through the thickets of clouds,

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Is she not pursuing
The white clouds?

Knight Kilbo once stood by the water,
Reflecting his face in the blue.
Henceforth I shall seek and gather
In pebbles the depth of his mind.

Knight, you are the towering pine,
That scorns frost, ignores snow.

MASTER WOLMYONG
(c. 742-765)

REQUIEM

In memory of his sister, he offered a mass for her soul with the dedication of this poem.

On the tough road of life and death,
That is near our land,
You went, afraid,
Without words.

We know not where we go,
Leaves blown, scattered,
Though fallen from the same tree,
By the first winds of autumn.

Abide, sister, perfect your ways,
Until we meet in the Pure Land.

HIMYONG
(c. 742-765)

HYMN TO THE THOUSAND-EYED GODDESS

A woman named Himyong in the village Hangi gave birth to a boy; but he became blind at the age of five. The mother took

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him before the presence of the Merciful Goddess, painted on the north wall of the Left Hall of the Temple Punhwang, and composed this poem and prayed. The child recovered his eyesight.

Falling on my knees,
Pressing my hands together,
Thousand-handed Merciful Goddess,
I implore thee,

Yield me,
Who lack,
One among your thousand eyes,
By your mystery restore me whole.

If you grant me one of your eyes,
O the bounty, then, of your charity.

CH'OYONG
(879)

SONG OF CH'OYONG

This is probably the most famous Silla poem of all. Since peace and prosperity prevailed and the people rejoiced, King Hyongang visited Kaeunp'o. When he started back to his castle, suddenly black clouds arose, a dense fog thickened, and his men could not march forth. An inquiry was made, and a weatherman answered that this was all due to the anger of the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea, and that he could only be calmed by prayers in the temple. Accordingly, the prayers were offered, and the sun reappeared. The Dragon King, much pleased by the offering, appeared with his seven sons before the King, and praised his virtues. When the Dragon King returned to the Sea after the song and dance, one of his sons did not accompany him, but instead followed King Hyongang and came to the capital. He, the son of the Dragon King, called himself Ch'oyong, and married a certain woman from the Kang family. Seeing that she was extremely beautiful, an evil spirit transformed himself into a man and attacked her in her room while Ch'oyong was away. But

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Ch'oyong returned, and witnessed the scene; and with calm he sang this song, which so moved the evil spirit that it went away.

Having caroused far into the night,
In the moonlit capital,
I return home and in my bed,
Behold, four legs.

Two have been mine;
Whose are the other two?
Two had been mine:
No, no, they are taken.

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CHARLES S. SINGLETON

End of a Poem

At the beginning of the *Paradiso* comes the theme that will end the poem with that happy ending which, for Dante, made this a Comedy:

> *La gloria di colui che tutto move*
> *per l'universo penetra e risplende*
> *in una parte più e meno altrove.*
> *Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende*
> *fu'io, e vidi cose che ridire*
> *nè sa nè può chi di là su discende;*
> *perchè appressando sè al suo disire,*
> *nostro intelletto si profonda tanto,*
> *che dietro la memoria non può ire.*[1]
>
> —*Par.* I, 1-9

In the end, the steady gaze of this wayfarer "who has taken so many steps" to reach the point where that is possible, will move up into the light of glory which "in Itself is true"; and there, in the end, the struggle of memory will also enter in, the effort to move back over the way once traversed, itself becoming a part of the last advance upon the final goal.

All of which has a firm basis, of course, in doctrine theological and mystical. St. Paul, as the poem has already reminded us (*Inf.* II, 28) and as it does now again (*Par.* I, 73), had the experience of Paradiso, hearing "secret words which it is not granted unto man to utter."

Mystics generally agreed moreover that this experience of union with God in eternity could not be of long duration. Indeed we may consider that were Dante's journey given as a purely literal experience, there could have been in this ending a serious difficulty for a poem so responsible to theology: for how should one who

[1] "The glory of the All-Mover penetrates and shines throughout the universe, in one part more and in another less. In the heaven which partakes most of His light was I, and saw things which he who descends from up there has neither the power nor the knowledge to relate; because our intellect, approaching its desire, goes so deep that memory cannot follow after it."

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attained to the vision of God face to face, ever turn away from that vision? The angels do not do so, nor do the blessed once they have reached it. How then could he? Since desire would be entirely satisfied, there could be no turning to any other object. This, an established point of doctrine, is in fact recognized and declared in the last canto of the poem, and just at the moment when the experience of that supreme vision is being had:

> *A quella luce cotal si diventa,*
> *che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto*
> *è impossibil che mai si consenta;*
> *però che il ben, ch'è del volere obietto,*
> *tutto s'accoglie in lei; e fuor di quella*
> *è defettivo ciò ch'e lì perfetto.*[2]
>
> —*Par.* XXXIII, 100-106

But the potential difficulty is resolved in the structure of the poem, in its allegorical dimension. For, in that other sense, this journey is one taking place here and now, in this life, a journey of the mind and heart to God. And the third and last stage of this journey is *rapture* as conceived and defined in the theology which Dante knew:

> The Divine essence cannot be seen by a created intellect save through the light of glory, of which it is written (Ps. XXXV, 10): "In Thy light we shall see light." But this light can be shared in two ways. First, by way of an abiding form, and thus it beatifies the saints in heaven. Secondly, by way of a transitory passion . . . and in this way that light was in Paul when he was in rapture. Hence this vision did not beatify him simply, so as to overflow into his body, but only in a restricted sense.
>
> —Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* II-II, 175, 3.

The whole journey to God as the poem represents it, may be marked off into three areas, according to the kind of light by which the advance through each is made: 1) The natural light of reason, which prevails through that stretch of the way where Virgil is guide, from the door of Hell up to the summit of Purgatory; 2) the light of grace which in the figure of Beatrice as guide presides over that second stage in the upward way, from

[2]"Before that light one becomes such that it is not possible he should be willing to turn from it to any other sight. For good, which is the object of the will, is in it [that light] all in-gathered, and what, outside of it, is defective, is perfect therein."

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the summit of Purgatory to that other summit in Paradise where she leaves Dante to take her seat in the great rose of Heaven; and 3) that light of glory of which Aquinas has spoken, which begins to descend and to be accessible to the wayfarer following upon the prayer by St. Bernard, making possible the final upward advance to the ultimate vision. Thus, a third and final stage of the whole journey to God is covered in a single canto, the one hundredth and last of the poem.

The signal that the end is at hand and that only a limited time remains for the completion of this journey is given in Bernard's words which close the penultimate canto. Already here the poem is beginning to register the completion of a circle. For Bernard's tour of the rose, an eye-tour distinguishing and naming those who sit so symmetrically in that great amphitheater, ends by coming full circle to Anna, then to Adam, then to Lucia who, at Mary's call, had first moved to send Beatrice to summon aid for her lover engaged in a losing struggle on the slope before the wolf (*Inferno* II) and falling back into the darkness and the sleep of sin.

As thus by reminiscence the poem brings its beginning into its end, Bernard's words speak of a certain allotted time for what still lies ahead (and may the figure which he uses be noted: we stand here at the highest reaches of this poem, at its "sublimest", if ever it is to have such. Yet Dante's highest is still in intimate touch with the lowliest: a tailor and his measure of cloth):

Di contr' a Pietro vedi sedere Anna,
tanto contenta di mirar sua figlia,
che non move occhio per cantare osanna.
E contro al maggior padre di famiglia
siede Lucia, che mosse la tua donna,
quando chinavi, a ruinar, le ciglia.
Ma perchè'l tempo fugge che t'assonna,
qui farem punto, come buon sartore
che com'egli ha del panno fa la gonna;
e drizzeremo li occhi al primo amore,
sì che, guardando verso lui, penetri
quant'e possibil per lo suo fulgore.[3]

—*Par.* XXXII, 133-144

[3] "Opposite Peter you see Ann sitting, so happy to gaze upon her daughter [Mary], that

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The movement of penetration along that ray of light of glory descending, is all that lies ahead now as this long journey draws so near to its close. The wayfarer stands beside Bernard on the floor of the amphitheater of Paradise and for him time is limited. He bears with him still the weight of his mortality. He is of this life, and the experience now to come cannot last for long.

2.

On to this final scene, into this last advance of the journey, comes another figure, evoked by another voice. Figure and voice are not new in the poem. We have met them before. The voice is that of the poet speaking out along the line of this journey. And by its appearance again and again along that moving line we have been made aware of "another" wayfarer, moving not in the past as the one always does, but ever in the present, back over the way of that journey which had been in time and now is in memory.

The place where such a voice might in fact be expected is precisely where it does come through the poem: in the invocations which open new themes and movements, at the beginnings of canticles, as in the first verses of the *Purgatorio.* There we are given the poet as one moving in a sea voyage, passing at this point from a first realm to a second, one whose ship now enters better water and leaves a cruel sea behind:

> *Per correr migliori acque alza le vele*
> *omai la navicella del mio ingegno,*
> *che lascia dietro a sè mar sì crudele;*
> *e canterò di quel secondo regno,*
> *dove l'umano spirito si purga*
> *e di salire al ciel diventa degno.*[4]
>
> —*Purg.* I, 1-6

This journey now is clearly a journey in the present tense (even

she does not move an eye as she sings hosanna; and opposite the greatest father of families [Adam] sits Lucia who sent your lady when you, for your ruin, were lowering your eyes. But because time is flying, which weighs you with sleep, here we shall make an end, as a good tailor who makes the skirt according to the cloth he has; and we shall raise our eyes to the First Love, so that, looking toward Him, you may penetrate as far as possible along His light."

[4]"To sail better waters now the little ship of my genius raises its sails and leaves behind so cruel a sea; and I shall sing of that second realm where the human spirit is purged and becomes worthy of rising to heaven."

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though in memory), this way of a ship is made possible by a poet's genius helped by the Muses and by a light Divine. A little ship of genius moves before our eyes and we follow in the wake of it as it advances. The same voice, putting in again near the beginning of the *Paradiso*, so presents this voyage in an apostrophe to us, the readers:

O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
desiderosi d'ascoltar, seguiti
dietro al mio legno che cantando varca,
tornate a riveder li vostri liti:
non vi mettete in pelago, chè, forse
perdendo me rimarreste smarriti.
L'acqua ch'io prendo già mai non si corse:
Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo,
e nove Muse mi dimostran l'Orse.
Voi altri pochi che drizzaste il collo
per tempo al pan de li angeli, del quale
vivesi qui ma non sen vien satollo,
metter potete ben per l'alto sale
vostro navigio, servando mio solco
dinanzi a l'acqua che ritorna equale.
Que' gloriosi che passaro a Colco
non s'ammiraron come voi farete,
quando Iason vider fatto bifolco.[5]

—*Par.* II, 1-18

These are indeed uncharted seas. *We* can follow only in the wake of a ship drawing water never drawn before. We move on a course charted only in the memory of one who once made this journey through this realm. Now a poem moves along the outline of that way.

Because of the intervention of this voice, and of the role which

[5]"O you who are in a tiny boat eager to hear, who have followed after my ship which fords in song, turn back to see your shores again, do not enter upon the deep, for, if you lost me, you might perhaps lose your way. The water which I draw was never sailed before. Minerva inspires and Apollo leads, and nine muses show me the Bears. You other few who early did stretch your neck for the bread of angels, of which we do live here but are never sated, you can indeed launch your ship on the high sea, holding to my wake ahead of the water which becomes smooth again. Those glorious ones who crossed to Colchis [the Argonauts], when they saw Jason become a plowman, were not as amazed as you will be."

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it assigns to the poet within the poem, it becomes necessary to distinguish more than one "voyager" in the poem's action.

To be sure, even without taking into account the figure of the author as *poet,* we know that we should have to distinguish two Dantes in the poem according to their time and place. For one, there is the figure moving then and there in the journey, in the past tense, through the realms of the afterlife, that wayfarer who is guided first by Virgil, then by Beatrice, and finally by the light of glory descending. And, then, there is the Dante who has returned from this journey and speaks of it now from a position in this life (how often *his* use of the adverb "here" in the poem startles us, because we have been so vividly placed "*there*" in the world beyond, that "*there*" has become "*here*" for us!). This Dante returned is author now, writing of his experience; and the writing, of course, is in the present, though the journey recounted is past. In so far as he is the one who did go that way and having returned, may now tell of that experience, he can and does present himself as scribe merely of this matter, as chronicler or historian, faithfully reporting what had been. And it is in this figure of the author-chronicler that we must find the poet. But the poet is more than the scribe. The poet moves, in a ship of genius, and all the Muses together with Minerva and Apollo inspire him, give wind to his sails. He too is engaged in a journey like the first figure, but he moves in a present tense; and is, so to speak, not *here,* but *there,* where the prow of a ship breaks water *now,* in an ever-moving present, wherever we are in the poem. The verses we have noted could not put it more clearly: *che cantando varca.* The ship *fords now,* and its movement is that of the poem itself (*cantando*), as the poem advances toward the last goal. This notion of a *fording* coming here at the beginning of the *Paradiso* must imply some kind of passing from one shore to another. And so it is. The whole journey through this third realm is a passing from time to eternity.

Let it be said that the metaphor of the poet's genius as a ship, and of the Muses' inspiration as the wind in its sails, is of course no invention of Dante's. Its presence in the two invocations is consciously conventional (in a time not ashamed of convention). Dante may well have had Virgil in mind here, as he so often did. The extension given to the figure at the beginning of *Paradiso* is

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striking, to be sure, evoking finally the voyage of the Argonauts into unknown seas (a voyage recalled again, significantly, in the last canto of the poem); but even so it is no more than the extension of a conventional figure.

We may not fail however to note one considerable difference arising in Dante's use of such a conceit and any use that Virgil could have made of it in the *Aeneid*. For the *Aeneid* is not conceived in the first person, whereas the *Comedy* is. Thus when the poet speaks out *as poet* in Virgil's epic, it is a voice cast exceptionally in the first person, for the poem is given in the third. Aeneas moves in a third-person role or at least is always distinct from the poet even where he tells the story. Not so in the *Comedy*. In Dante's 'epic' the protagonist is the same person as the poet and the two are distinguishable one from the other only on a principle of time. We might put it so: one figure, Dante the wayfarer *there*, in the realms beyond, is a bearer of past time; whereas the other, Dante the poet, the navigator whose ship cuts waters now, is a bearer of present time. Since they are *ultimately* the same person, it is always at least conceivable that the two might come to be one.

3.

The two figures might merge. This in fact is what they are brought to do at the end of the poem in a strategy resolving the whole structure, remarkable to witness and experience.

We may come back to that last canto of the poem and to the particular situation there as the protagonist, following St. Bernard's prayer, looks up into the ray of *lumen gloriae* which now begins to reach him:

Bernardo m'accennava e sorridea
perch'io guardassi suso; ma io era
già per me stesso tal qual ei volea;
chè la mia vista, venendo sincera,
e più e più intrava per lo raggio
de l'alta luce che da sè è vera.[6]

—*Par.* XXXIII, 49-54

[6] "Bernard was motioning to me and smiling, that I should look upward; but already by myself I was such as he wished; for as my sight became clear, further and further did it enter into the ray of the high light which in itself is true."

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The intellect is finally bearing upon the object of its ultimate desire, of all ultimate desires. That object is to be reached now along that ray of light descending. The focus could not be in terms more simple. It is the focus of love: an intellect inclining and moving toward an object of desire, that movement itself being *moto spiritale* toward the beloved. Thus we observe that in its last canto this poem has come into the simplest focus possible. No more are we aware of a guide beside the figure of the wayfarer. He faces into the light alone, a light which in itself is true. Or as a shift in metaphor would have it, he stands alone now and gazes into that single volume bound by love where is all that in the created universe is so many scattered leaves. The poem (and only one who has the experience of coming in out of its universe knows how powerful and unique it is) moves out of its multiform perspectives into the one which is last and all, Alpha and Omega: the focus of love in its essence.

But now, of a sudden, into the line of this movement in past tense, enters another voice, the voice of one moving in the present:

> *Da quinci innanzi il mio veder fu maggio*
> *che'l parlar nostro, ch'a tal vista cede,*
> *e cede la memoria a tanto oltraggio.*
> *Qual è colui che somniando vede,*
> *che dopo il sogno la passione impressa*
> *rimane, e l'altro a la mente non riede,*
> cotal son io, *chè quasi tutta cessa*
> *mia visione, ed ancor mi distilla*
> *nel core il dolce che nacque da essa.*
> *Così la neve al sol si disigilla;*
> *così al vento ne le foglie levi*
> *si perdea la sentenza di Sibilla.*[7]
>
> —*Par.* XXXIII, 55-56

This voice in the present tense we know. It has come before. And our first surprise on finding it breaking in here at the end

[7]"From this point on my vision was greater than is our speech, which yields at such a sight, as memory yields to such a going beyond. As one who dreaming sees, and after the dream the emotion endured remains and the rest comes not back to mind; *such am I,* for my vision ceases almost entirely now, and still in my heart comes the sweetness that was born of it. Thus does snow melt before the sun, thus on the light leaves was the Sibyl's prophecy lost."

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is allayed when we see that it comes here to register what was proclaimed at the start of this journey in *Paradiso:* that memory cannot go back over the whole of the way of a journey like this, of such an *oltraggio,* such a going beyond; that memory faints and falls back from such heights. The voice is here to declare, in the present, a falling away of vision—and this all the while that that other movement of a protagonist's vision there, in the past tense, is advancing upon the goal. Thus both the fading away of vision and the attaining of vision are brought into this last stretch of the journey, introducing there a tension of opposite poles or loci. The attainment is to be *there,* above the wayfarer as he stands beside Bernard, and as his vision moves upward into the light. The falling away is *here,* in memory, where the struggle to pass along that way again takes place, where attainment is reattainment. But reattainment cannot be without another descent of grace, to the *poet* now. A fresh invocation is made, this time addressed to the uplifting Light itself: to It will the glory of this "victory" redound:

O somma luce che tanto ti levi
da' concetti mortali, a la mia mente
ripresta un poco di quel che parevi,
e fa la lingua mia tanto possente,
ch'una favilla sol de la tua gloria
possa lasciare a la futura gente;
chè, per tornare alquanto a mia memoria
e per sonare un poco in questi versi,
più si conceperà di tua vittoria.[8]

—*Par.* XXXIII, 66-75

Thus two poles, a *here* and a *there,* two loci in space, are brought upon the stage of the action at the end, as a great structure completes itself. But it must be noted also that there are likewise two poles in time, as it were, introduced into this last act as well. For while it is true that the falling away of vision is here, in memory, the reattaining of it is there where the light is and the goal is, there where the ship of the poet, *che cantando varca,* must

[8] "O highest light so raised above mortal concepts, give back to my mind a little of what you appeared to be, and give my tongue such power that it may leave at least one spark to future folk; for through a return somewhat to memory and a sounding forth a little in these verses, the more will your victory be conceived."

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reach port. The "ship" and its progress there, along the line of a moving present, is given by the voice of the poet breaking in to declare from moment to moment the successful advance. And the voice is the more familiar to us in that it speaks here again of the voyage of the Argonauts even as it did in the beginning of *Paradiso:*

> *Un punto solo* m'è *maggior letargo*
> *che venticinque secoli a la 'mpresa,*
> *che fè Nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo.*
> *Così la mente mia, tutta sospesa,*
> mirava *fissa, immobile e attenta,*
> *e sempre di mirar faciesi accesa.*[9]
>
> —*Par.* XXXIII, 94-99

The shifting movement, in those two terzine alone, from a present-tense position back to a past, both being positions there and now abreast of one another in the advance upon the goal, must serve here to represent the kind of alternation which is made continuous and predominant in the closing verses of the *Comedy.* But let every reader follow this through for himself. Let him put to the test of his own reading what may truly be the most remarkable achievement of an end in poetry that we know: an end where *here* and *there,* where *then* and *now,* where disparate *loci* in time and space, are brought to converge upon a single point and there to merge. This is done in the terms we have noted, of the two figures of the protagonist-wayfarer which are distinct on a principle of time but which are always one, *in the end,* as we say. Those two figures are, so to speak, the bearers of two tenses: one of the past tense, since he moves always in the past; the other of the present, since that is where he, the poet, moves. Time present and time past are thus given objective representation in the structure and because the figures which bear this representation on that stage are ultimately the same figure, they are capable of merging, even *in time.*

And yet, can that be? Can time past and time present meet somewhere *in time?* In the time and space of a poem, yes, where a meeting-place can be had which is, as the poem gives it, above

[9] "One single moment *is* to me a greater sleep than twenty-five centuries have been for that adventure which caused Neptune to wonder at the Argo's shadow. Thus my mind, in suspense, *gazed* fixedly, motionless and intent, and grew ever more eager to see."

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and beyond time in eternity, before the One where all lines out of time converge. And it is the living experience of that converging made possible in poetry that causes the end of this poem to be the supreme achievement and experience that it is.

A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa. . .

That verse, declaring the end, is only one terzina from the end. We know that the verb might have been in the present tense as well. For in that verse two lines of advance are merged. It was the "alta fantasia" of the poet which was moving *now*, in the present tense, back over the way, to reattainment of vision. The "high fantasy" ought to come here as subject of a verb in a present tense. Yet the verb must needs be in the past; for there is that other movement of the *first* attainment of vision, which must come to *its* end.

And beyond this verse announcing the end of both progressions in time past and time present, a last terzina, final triune link in the great chain, brings in the image of a wheel which catches up those two progressions and resolves the polar tension between them:

A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disio e il velle,
sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.[10]
—*Par.* XXXIII, 142-145

Past and present, in their converging linear movements, pass, on the instant of their merging, into the figure of a circle, and the circle is as a wheel, equally weighted on one side and the other, those two progessions becoming one movement now—motion which is that of neither but contains them both, where desire and satisfaction are equally balanced, turning in harmony with that circular Love that moves the sun and all the other stars. In the simultaneous fade-out of the attainment and of the reattainment of vision by way of two converging linear paths, each time-bearing and space-bearing, the image of a circle resolves their polar disparity by catching them up into a figure of eternity.

[10]"Here the high fantasy failed in its power, but already desire and will in me were turned, like a wheel that is evenly turned, by that love which moves the sun and all the other stars."

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DANTE ALIGHIERI

Canzone

Io son venuto al punto de la rota
che l'orizzonte, quando il sol si corca,
ci partorisce il geminato cielo,
e la stella d'amor ci sta remota
per lo raggio lucente che la 'nforca
sí di traverso che le si fa velo;
e quel pianeta che conforta il gelo
si mostra tutto a noi per lo grand' arco
nel qual ciasun di sette fa poca ombra:
e però non disgombra
un sol penser d'amore, ond' io son carco,
la mente mia, ch' è piú dura che petra
in tener forte imagine di petra.

Levasi de la rena d' Etïopia
lo vento peregrin che l'aere turba,
per la spera del sol ch' ora la scalda;
e passa il mare, onde conduce copia
di nebbia tal che, s'altro non la struba,
questo emisperio chiude tutto e salda;
e poi si solve, e cade in bianca falda
di fredda neve ed in noiosa pioggia,
onde l'aere s' attrista tutto e piagne:
e Amor, che sue ragne
ritira in alto pel vento che poggia,
non m'abbandona, sí è bella donna
questa crudel che m' è data per donna.

Fuggito è ogne augel che 'l caldo segue
del paese d'Europa, che non perde
le sette stelle gelide unquemai;
e li altri han posto a le lor voci triegue
per non sonarle infino al tempo verde,
se ciò non fosse per cagion di guai;
e tutti li animali che son gai
de lor natura, son d'amor disciolti,
però che 'l freddo lor spirito ammorta:

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translated by
HARRY DUNCAN

Canzone

Now I have come to the wheel's point
where, at sunset, the horizon
delivers up the twins of heaven,
and love's star lies too far and faint
to see, forked by the fulgent rays
that clasp and veil as they are cloven,
and on the great round where the seven
cast shortest shadows, full displayed
that planet stands that comforts cold:
and yet I hold
each thought of love, the galling load
my mind carries, as firm as stone
to bear the image of this stone.

Up from the Ethiopian sands
the alien, air-embroiling wind
rises, fired by the solar sphere,
crosses the sea, gathers and sends
the hoard of cloud that uncontended
shuts and seals this hemisphere,
and then dissolves and falls down here
as tedious rain and blank snow,
and so the air all saddened weeps:
but Love, who keeps
his nets out of the stormy sky,
does not quit me, so fair the lady
cruelly reigning as my lady.

Each bird that seeks the warmth has flown
this part of Europe where the polar
seven stars hold constant stay;
the rest, until the time of green
setting their tongues a truce, are still
except to sound alackaday;
and all animals that are gay
by nature, are let loose from love,
their spirits deadened through the snows:

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e 'l mio piú d'amor porta;
ché li dolzi persier' non mi son tolti
né mi son dati per volta di tempo,
ma donna li mi dà c' ha picciol tempo.

Passato hanno lor termine le fronde
che trasse fuor la vertú d'Arïete
per adornare il mondo, e morta è l'erba;
ramo de foglia verde a noi s'asconde
se non se in lauro, in pino o in abete
o in alcun che sua verdura serba;
e tanto è la stagion forte ed acerba
c' ha morti li fioretti per le piagge,
li quai non poten tellerar la brina:
e la crudele spina
però Amor de cor non la mi tragge;
per ch' io son fermo de portarla sempre
ch' io sarò in vita, s' io vivesse sempre.

Versan le vene le fummifere acque
per li vapor' che la terra ha nel ventre,
che d' abisso li tira suso in alto;
onde cammino al bel giorno mi piacque
che ora è fatto rivo, e sarà mentre
che durerà del verno il grande assalto;
la terra fa un suol che par di smalto,
e l'acqua morta si converte in vetro
per la freddura che di fuor la serra:
e io de la mia guerra
non son però tornato un passo a retro,
né vo' tornar; ché, se 'l martiro è dolce,
la morte de' passare ogni altro dolce.

Canzone, or che sarà di me ne l'altro
dolce tempo novello, quando piove
amore in terra da tutti li cieli,
quando per questi geli
amore è solo in me, e non altrove?
Saranne quello ch' è d'un uom de marmo,
se in pargoletta fia per core un marmo.[1]

[1]Text from Dante Alighieri, *Rime* a cura di Gianfranco Contini, seconda edizione riveduta e accresciuta, Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino, 1946, pp. 149-153.

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and yet love grows
in mine; my sweet thoughts stay alive,
not having come from turning time,
but a girl ripened a short time.

The term is over for the verdure
the virtue of the Ram drew out
to deck the earth; the grass is dead,
and branches not of laurel, fir,
or other evergreens, without
their leaves to hide them, shiver naked,
and flowers under the fierce, frigid
season on their slopes lie slain,
too delicate to stand the frost:
but from my breast
Love does not draw the thorn of pain
that living I shall surely ever
bear, though I should live forever.

The springs are gushing smoking water
forced by the vapors in earth's womb
up through her veins from the abyss;
the path that pleased me in fair weather
is now, and will remain a flume
while winter's great assault persist;
dead waters harden into crystal
and all the ground, one concrete floor
under the cold's coercive grip:
yet not a step
have I reatreated from my war,
and will not; for, if pain is sweet,
then most of all must death be sweet.

My song, what shall I win the next
sweet season of renewal when
love reigns on earth from all the sky,
since none but I
keep love through winter's regimen?—
Only what comes to any stone,
if the girl's heart remain a stone.

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JEAN DE LA FONTAINE

Le Philosophe Scythe (*Fables*, XII, 20)

Un philosophe austère, et né dans la Scythie,
Se proposant de suivre une plus douce vie,
Voyagea chez les Grecs, et vit en certains lieux
Un sage assez semblable au vieillard de Virgile,
Homme égalant les rois, homme approchant des dieux,
Et, comme ces derniers, satisfait et tranquille.
Son bonheur consistait aux beautés d'un jardin.
Le Scythe l'y trouva qui, la serpe à la main,
De ses arbres à fruit retranchait l'inutile,
Ebranchait, émondait, ôtait ceci, cela,
Corrigeant partout la nature,
Excessive à payer ses soins avec usure.
Le Scythe alors lui demanda:
"Pourquoi cette ruine? Etait-il d'homme sage
De mutiler ainsi ces pauvres habitants?
Quittez-moi votre serpe, instrument de dommage;
Laissez agir la faux du Temps:
Ils iront assez tôt border le noir rivage.
—J'ôte le superflu, dit l'autre, et l'abattant,
Le reste en profite d'autant."
Le Scythe, retourné dans sa triste demeure,
Prend la serpe à son tour, coupe et taille à toute heure;
Conseille à ses voisins, prescrit à ses amis
Un universel abatis.
Il ôte de chez lui les branches les plus belles,
Il tronque son verger contre toute raison,
Sans observer temps ni saison,
Lunes ni vielles ni nouvelles.
Tout languit et tout meurt.
Ce Scythe exprime bien
Un indiscret stoïcien:
Celui-ci retranche de l'âme
Désirs et passions, le bon et le mauvais,
Jusqu'aux plus innocents souhaits.
Contre de telles gens, quant à moi, je réclame.
Ils ôtent à nos cœurs le principal ressort;
Ils font cesser de vivre avant que l'on soit mort.

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translated by
MARIANNE MOORE

The Scythian Philosopher

Once a philosopher famed for austerity,
Left Scythia that he might taste luxury
And sailed to Greece where he met in his wanderings,
A sage like the one Virgil has made memorable—
Who seemed a king or god, remote from mundane things,
Since like the gods he was at peace and all seemed well.
Now a garden enabled his life to expand
And the Scythian found him pruning-hook in hand
Lopping here and there what looked unprofitable.
He sundered and slendered, curtailing this and that,
Careful that not a dead twig be spared;
Then for care to excess, Nature paid a sure reward.
"But are you not inconsiderate?"
The Scythian inquired. He said, "Is it good
To denude a tree of twigs and leave it scarcely one?
Lay down your pruning-hook; your onslaught is too rude.
Permit time to do what needs to be done:
Dead wood will soon be adrift on the Styx' dark flood."
The Sage said,—"Remove sere boughs and when they are gone,
One has benefitted what remain."
The Scythian returned to his bleak shore,
Seized his own pruning-hook, was at work hour on hour,
Enjoining upon any in the vicinity
That they work—the whole community.
He sheared off whatever was beautiful,
Indiscriminately trimmed and cut down,
Persevering in reduction
Beneath new moons and full
Till none of his trees could bear.
In this Scythian
We have the injudicious man
Or so-called Stoic, who would restrain
His best emotions along with the depraved
And give up every innocent thing he craved.
As for me, such perverted logic is my bane.
Don't smother the fire in my heart which makes life dear;
Do not snuff me out yet. I'm not laid on my bier.

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Phébus et Borée (VI, 3)

Borée et le soleil virent un voyageur
Qui s'était muni par bonheur
Contre le mauvais temps. On entrait dans l'automne,
Quand la précaution aux voyageurs est bonne:
Il pleut, le soleil luit, et l'écharpe d'Iris
Rend ceux qui sortent avertis
Qu'en ces mois le manteau leur est fort nécessaire;
Les Latins les nommaient douteux, pour cette affaire.
Notre homme s'était donc à la pluie attendu:
Bon manteau bien doublé, bonne étoffe bien forte.
"Celui-ci, dit le vent, prétend avoir pourvu
A tous les accidents; mais il n'a pas prévu
Que je saurai souffler de sorte
Qu'il n'est bouton qui tienne; il faudra, si je veux,
Que le manteau s'en aille au diable.
L'ébattement pourrait nous en être agréable:
Vous plait-il de l'avoir? —Eh bien, gageons nous deux,
Dit Phébus, sans tant de paroles,
A qui plus tôt aura dégarni les épaules
Du cavalier que nous voyons.
Commencez: je vous laisse obscurcir mes rayons."
Il n'en fallut pas plus. Notre souffleur à gage
Se gorge de vapeurs, s'enfle comme un ballon,
Fait un vacarme de démon,
Siffle, souffle, tempête, et brise en son passage
Maint toit quit n'en peut mais, fait périr maint bateau,
Le tout au sujet d'un manteau.
Le cavalier eut soin d'empecher que l'orage
Ne se pût engouffrer dedans;
Cela le préserva. Le vent perdit son temps:
Plus il se tourmentait, plus l'autre tenait ferme;
Il eut beau faire agir le collet et les plis.
Sitôt qu'il fut au bout du terme
Qu'à la gageure on avait mis,
Le soleil dissipe la nue,
Récrée et puis pénètre enfin le cavalier,
Sous son balandras fait qu'il sue,
Le contraint de s'en dépouiller:
Encor n'usa-t-il pas de toute sa puissance.

Plus fait douceur que violence.

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Phoebus and Boreas

The sun and the north wind observed a traveller
Who was cloaked with particular care
Because fall had returned; for when autumn has come,
What we wear must be warm or we dare not leave home.
Both rain and rainbow as the sun shines fitfully,
Warn one to dress warily
In these months when we don't know for what to prepare—
An uncertain time in the Roman calendar.
Though our traveller was fortified for a gale,
With interlined cloak which the rain could not penetrate,
The wind said, "This man thinks himself impregnable
And his cloak is well sewn, but my force can prevail
As he'll find in the blast I create,
That not a button has held. Indeed before I am through,
I may waft the whole mantle away.
The battle could afford us amusement, I'd say.
Do you fancy a contest?" The sun said, "I do.
Mere words are unprofitable,
Let us see which can first unfasten the mantle
Protecting the pedestrian.
Begin: I shall hide; you uncloak him if you can."
Then our blower swelled, swallowed what wind he could,
To form a balloon, and with the wager to win,
Made demoniacal din,
Puffed, snorted, and sighed till the blast that he brewed
Left ships without a sail and homes without a roof
Because a mantle proved storm-proof.
It was a triumph for the man to have withstood
The onslaught of wind that had rushed in,
As he somehow stood firm. The wind roared his chagrin—
A defeated boaster since his gusts had been borne.
Controlling clasp and skirt required dexterity,
But the wind found nothing torn
And must stop punctually.
The cloud had made it cool
Till the sun's genial influence caused the traveller to give way,
And perspiring because wearing wool,
He cast off a wrap too warm for the day
Though the sun had not yet shone with maximum force.

Clemency may be our best resource.

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L'Ecolier, le Pédant et le Maître d'un Jardin

(IX, 5)

Certain enfant qui sentait son collège,
Doublement sot et doublement fripon
Par le jeune âge et par le privilège
Qu'ont les pédants de gâter la raison,
Chez un voisin dérobait, ce dit-on,
Et fleurs et fruits. Ce voisin, en automne,
Des plus beaux dons que nous offre Pomone
Avait la fleur, les autres le rebut.
Chaque saison apportait son tribut;
Car au printemps il jouissait encore
Des plus beaux dons que nous présente Flore.
Un jour dans son jardin il vit notre écolier
Qui, grimpant, sans égard, sur an arbre fruitier,
Gâtait jusqu'aux boutons, douce et frêle espérance,
Avant-coureurs des biens que promet l'abondance:
Même il ébranchait l'arbre; et fit tant à la fin,
Que le possesseur du jardin
Envoya faire plainte au maître de la classe.
Celui-ci vint suivi d'un cortège d'enfants:
Voilà le verger plein de gens
Pires que le premier. Le pédant, de sa grâce,
Accrut le mal en amenant
Cette jeunesse mal instruite:
Le tout, à ce qu'il dit, pour faire un châtiment
Qui pût servir d'exemple, et dont toute sa suite
Se souvint à jamais comme d'une leçon.
Là-dessus il cita Virgile et Cicéron,
Avec force traits de science.
Son discours dura autant que la maudite engeance
Eut le temps de gâter en cent lieux le jardin.

Je hais les pièces d'éloquence
Hors de leur place, et qui n'ont point de fin,
Et ne sais bête au monde pire
Que l'écolier, si ce n'est le pédant.
Le meilleur de ces deux pour voisin, à vrai dire,
Ne me plairait aucunement.

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The Schoolboy, The Pedant, and The Man with a Garden

Here was a youth symbolic of the school—
Up to his chin in what would mean the cane,
Fearsomely young and bearing out the rule
That pedants can impair anybody's brain,
Stealing fruit from a neighbor, old refrain;
Deflowering a tree. In the fall every time,
Pomona's gifts to the neighbor were sublime,
Superior to whatever others grew
As seasons led forth their retinue.
Where in spring find the flowers gardens bore,
Like Flora's own in bloom at his door?
He saw a boor from the school in the orchard one day,
Who'd got into a fruit-tree and was making it sway—
Wreaking useless damage. Fruit and flowers. What defense?
Injuring buds that might later be sustenance,
The schoolboy maimed the tree, did such harm in the end
That the fruit-grower, disheartened,
Complained to the school-master of the scapegrace,
Who brought others until the orchard was over-run
By boys doing what the first had done
Except that they were worse. The pedant—man in its most worthless phase—
Was adding to all the harm begun,
Dunces who had been mistaught,
Saying his object was to discipline but one,
The marauder who was originally caught—
All profiting by the demonstration.
Then he droned Virgil and Cicero on and on,
Each of course with reference.
Meanwhile boys swarmed through the orchard till the miscreants
Did the garden more harm than anybody could mend.

How I hate far-fetched magniloquence—
Discursive intrusiveness world without end.
If there are creatures who err
More than boys at play, it is pedants as inane.
I declare, with either near, one or the other,
God knows which inflicts the more pain.

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HOWARD NEMEROV

Yore

OVER THE LAVISH *Forgeterie* of the Beauldvoir Hotel rose the bone-china moon, rubbing all things to a hard beauty that looked permanent. Tomorrow would be the war, and everywhere in the hotel people accordingly rose and fell in value; meanwhile here was the moon swinging over the lovely gardens and the pool.

Alone at a marble-topped table, Mr. Luc le Mesurier bent his ancient head, baldness tipped in moonlight, toward the small ivory radio which murmuringly kept him company; from time to time he drew out of his coat tail and consulted his memorandum book, a thin, tall volume bound in calf-skin. Here with a gold pencil he made a note now and again, or placed a mark against the name of some acquaintance, or crossed off a name entirely; then with a slight contortion and a sigh he would turn to slip the book back into the tail of his coat, but always a remark made by the radio could cause him to get it out again almost at once.

Mr. Luc le Mesurier was a lean, elegant old gentleman, whose subtly gleaming black and white clothes fitted him like a second skin; when he arose, as he now did to welcome his expected companions, the tails of his coat curled slightly but deftly up and back as though they belonged to his own muscular arrangements. The dark tan of his face left off at the brow, for on bright days at the Beauldvoir Beach he was accustomed to wear, besides a black loincloth, a skullcap against the sun, and for this reason he looked, as he bowed and nodded, like an old priest or haloed saint.

After turning off the radio he drew out a chair for Mme. Mastaba, who with care placed her enormous backside between its arms and pressed down. The black sequins of her dress writhed with moonlight as, emplaced, she shook herself into comfort. Mr. Aiken Drum, the American millionaire, sat beside her and opposite to the place which Mr. le Mesurier now resumed. Mr. Aiken Drum was a large shaggy man with a full head of grey hair, rather unkempt. In this company Mr. le Mesurier resembled a whangee cane placed on exhibition beside a knobkerry stick and a pillow—an exhibition, perhaps, in a black museum, of instruments employed in the commission of long-forgotten crimes.

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"It is hard to believe," said Mr. Aiken Drum, "but it has happened at last."

"It was bound to come sooner or later," said Mr. le Mesurier. "I suppose none of you knows where Great Coco is? This is something the announcer has neglected to inform us of so far."

"It will be very quickly over," averred Mme. Mastaba. "Atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, very quickly over."

"No, no, this will not be very quickly over," said Mr. Aiken Drum somberly enough yet with a certain tone of pride. "It will be a long, bitter struggle. At least," he added, "we have seen my daughter married before it began."

Felicia Drum had been wed that very afternoon to Sir Layamon Brute, Marquess of Yore; the Bishop of Norfolk had been flown in to preside. It was now in the interval between the service and the wedding supper that the three elderly friends had gathered in the *Forgeterie*, at a table beside the pool.

"She does not love him, poor thing," said Mme. Mastaba. "A great shame."

"Well, no," replied Mr. Drum. "But she is a good girl, is Felicia, and knows that first things come first."

"He will perish in this war," said Mr. le Mesurier.

"Well," said Mr. Drum, spreading wide his hands, "that of course can't be helped." He snuffled slightly, and brushed the end of his nose with delicacy on the back of his wrist. "They will be down in a few minutes. Let us be cheerful."

A waiter now took their orders. Mr. le Mesurier had been drinking a wine which he persuaded the others to try, a very fine wine expressed from seaweed, tasting something like iodine, dry, reddish-brown and puckering. As an afterthought, he instructed the waiter to find out where in the world was Great Coco.

"It will doubtless be an island," he said, "for the announcer speaks of 'the airbase *on* Great Coco'."

"Who would have thought," said Mme. Mastaba, "we should have lived to see the day when we had to feel responsible for an airbase on Great Coco?"

"But reality is always improbable," observed Mr. le Mesurier.

Great Coco, the waiter told them, was in the Bay of Bengal.

"I am scarcely any the wiser for that," said Mme. Mastaba.

Mr. le Mesurier suddenly snapped on the radio again. After a silent moment they heard a chorus of young voices repeating the

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Hail Mary over and over again with the swaying emphasis of a roller coaster which takes a deep breath at the top of its initial climb, then rushes downward.

"No news as yet," said Mr. le Mesurier, turning the radio off.

"But that is more frightening than anything I have heard so far," said Mme. Mastaba. "During the First World War I was at the School of the Sacred Heart in Grenoble."

"I really cannot understand," said Mr. Aiken Drum, "why man cannot learn to live at peace with his fellow-man."

"It is possibly because, my dear," returned Mme. Mastaba, "man living at peace with his fellow-man would use considerably less oil than he will have to use under the present circumstances."

"My dear Andrea," said Mr. Aiken Drum in a dignified manner, "I did not want this war to happen."

With a slight wiggling motion Mr. le Mesurier now reached around to his coat-tail and drew forth his memorandum book.

"I was reflecting before you came," he said, "on where in the world one might go next. Doubtless everything will be destroyed in a few weeks, or the hotels will have no food and the servants will have been conscripted. Tananarive, possibly? But there will of course be an airbase there as well. Mukalla? Porto Alegre? Toby Lustig has a small inn at Misurata, but will it still be there? And will any sort of transport be available? On the other hand—Kristiansund? Or a farm near Stornoway? Ireland may be neutral; a visit with Salvadi at Castlebar? I fear life will not be made easy for the traveler."

"I shall go to my cousin at Denderah," said Mme. Mastaba. "No one ever bothers with the Upper Nile."

"And I return to the States tomorrow," said Mr. Drum. "Not exotic, but quite safe if one stays far from the cities. You are both invited. It is the children I am worried about."

"They will be evacuated, poor things, in droves," said Mme. Mastaba.

"It was my children I meant," said Mr. Drum. "Felicia and Layamon."

"She will go to Yore, I suppose," said Mr. le Mesurier, "and he to join his squadron."

"But they are coming in now," said Mme. Mastaba, raising her massive white head and peering toward the entrance.

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2.

Over the black water of the pool, moon-whitened in rippled streaks, an orchestra hidden in an island grove began to play The Wedding March. Felicia Drum advanced on the arm of her new husband the Marquess of Yore, the pair of them preceded by a small headwaiter who continually turned toward them to bow as he directed their path to the table. The girl, though she had put aside her white veil, still wore the wedding dress of white satin and a white cap of the same material. She looked pale and sullen, but charming. Sir Layamon Brute wore the somewhat Germanic-looking grey dress uniform of the Royal Air Force, with embroidered silver wings on the breast, three equal stripes of a Wing Commander on each sleeve, and upon his head the dully gleaming helmet with its high, horsehair crest, under which his thin, ruddy, pleasant face with its small red moustache did not appear especially adequate. A saber in scabbard swung at his side. Amid applause from the many guests at the tables beside the pool the bridal couple were seated with their elders just as the March came to an end.

"Exactly like a chamber pot," said Sir Layamon of his helmet, which he took off now and placed in the center of the table.

"It does form a strange costume for an aviator," observed Mme. Mastaba. "I thought they wore something more *sportif*."

"I am afraid," said Mr. Aiken Drum, "that this war will not be much of a wedding present for you two." He shook his head seriously, and Felicia, who at seventeen remained very uncertain about the great world, considered for a moment the idea that her father had really arranged the war with the object of giving her pleasure, and that he now rather regretted having gone to all that trouble. Under the fleeting influence of this notion she smiled brightly at him, to show appreciation.

"It can't be helped, sir," said Sir Layamon quietly. "Felicia will stay with Mother at Yore. I shall pack off to my Group as soon as we get back." He looked tenderly at his bride. "Not much of a show for you, my dear," he said.

Felicia looked back with an appearance of equal tenderness and leaned over to whisper something in his ear. What she whispered was, "You know what you can do with your stiff upper lip," but

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the others, unable to hear, interpreted the Marquess's sudden rigidity of expression as pleased surprise. After a moment he whispered back in her ear, pushing aside with his nose her brown hair, "I shall die in this war. You won't be troubled with me for very long." To which Felicia replied aloud, and with a slight smile, "We can't help that, can we?" It seemed to her that she was being unnecessarily cruel, but apart from having been both annoyed and fatigued by the long ceremony, she felt quite bewildered about the nature of the feelings that would henceforth, it seemed, be officially demanded of her. She had seen in the Tatler pictures of Yore, towering and ancient amid great trees, and it seemed to her that in order to live up to such a possession she would have to be somewhat haughty, inscrutable, full of cold, cryptic sentences and surprised at nothing, like a great lady in the movies. It was also true that she did not love her husband, but this was only because she did not know from any personal experience what love was, and also perhaps because he failed to frighten her, even when wearing the helmet with the horsehair crest.

A waiter brought more wine, the delicious, bitter wine from seaweed. Mr. le Mesurier turned on the radio again, and now an announcer was describing in a tense, professionally anxious voice the preparations for reprisal that were going on all over the world: the battleships and carriers getting up steam at Guam and Pearl and Scapa Flow; the huge aircraft engines beginning to turn on the runways at Reykjavik and Disco and Yell and distant Thule; vast uneasy populations beginning to move through the Balkans, through Turkey, through India; the air of the world laced with radio messages; the President of the United States would speak to the Congress.

"The King of Thule," said Mme. Mastaba. "We used to sing that song at school. There was a golden cup, a silver cup?"

"This is the century of dreams come true, is it not?" Mr. le Mesurier with doubtful relevance observed.

London and Paris, the announcer said, were under attack from the air. There was no news from these places, there was radio silence from these places.

"What a strange phrase," said Felicia, "as though *radio silence* were more golden than other kinds."

"It is a technical term," said the Marquess.

"A technical term," said Mr. le Mesurier, "meaning silence."

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"But look," said Mr. Aiken Drum, suddenly reaching out and turning off the radio, "the floor show is about to begin."

"Now there is radio silence indeed," said Mme. Mastaba.

Across the water the orchestra had begun to play once again, a brilliant fanfare followed by a dreamy, muted tune.

"It can hardly be a *floor* show," said Felicia, "unless the performers walk on water, which I understand is not done even in the century of dreams come true."

"My dear girl," her father replied, "you do not know everything about the world as yet."

While he spoke the music became louder, and gradually the depths of the pool beside them began to glow increasingly with light. Soon the reflexions of the moon, and the black surface itself, disappeared from view and were replaced by a softly brilliant fairyland of coral castles and coral foliage underwater. Small, brightly striped fish swam slowly about, and there was even the submerged hull of a ship, with broken masts and tattered rigging, half-sunken in sand covered with waving green moss. It was altogether a beautiful and strange sight, which Felicia had certainly not been expecting, and it made her feel for a moment privileged to mystery.

"It is a floor show of the ocean floor," said Mme. Mastaba. "They have it only here, at the Beauldvoir, I have seen it many times. It is very beautiful."

3.

Now through the softly radiant water, from the doorway of a distant castle, came swimming a dozen mermaids, naked and white as pearls. They moved effortlessly forward with sinuous twistings of their tails, and soon formed into a circle, around which they swam for some minutes.

"How do they stay under so long?" asked Felicia.

"They are said to be perfectly real mermaids," Mme. Mastaba replied, "imported from the Seychelles Islands. Only here do they have them. Nowhere else in the world."

"At the Beauldvoir you know you are getting the real thing, expensive as it is," said Mr. Aiken Drum.

"All the same," Mr. le Mesurier said, "I am inclined to think they are not real. Rather, the legs of those girls have been slipped

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into the hinder skins, the tails, you understand, of very large fish —glued there, you know."

"Ugh," said Felicia.

"But how, in that case, do they stay under for so long?" asked the Marquess. "Unless of course it is a trick," he added, anxious not to appear naive.

"Ah," said Mr. le Mesurier, "that I cannot tell you."

"I will tell you," said Mme. Mastaba with a certain emphasis. "It is because they are real mermaids, imported." She frowned at Mr. Luc le Mesurier. "You men," she said disdainfully.

"But there are no such things as mermaids," said Felicia petulantly, feeling nevertheless as though she were betraying her whole sex for nothing more than a cheap rationalistic idea picked up at school.

"There are these mermaids," replied Mme. Mastaba.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," said Mr. Aiken Drum.

"Horatio?" inquired Mme. Mastaba.

At this moment the music left off, and a galleon-like ship, manned in statuesque poses by a crew of perhaps a dozen men, moved slowly from behind the orchestra's island into the center of the pool; the spectators could see for an instant the outstretched hands of a number of waiters, porters and bellhops who must have given it a strong push. This ship came to a stop on the still water, its paper sails billowed out as though with a stiff breeze. One could see it wholly, down to the keel, seeming to hang in a medium scarcely existing, so clear and smooth the water; and down below the mermaids slowly swam about.

Now in the silence there broke forth the sound of a number of pianos dispersed around the place, a loud, confused rumbling and tinkling and clanging; and a blond young man climbed to the high poop of the vessel, placed one hand over his heart and, in the crook of the elbow thus formed, the golden crown he had been wearing. So poised, he began half to sing and half to declaim a long recitative interwoven with passages of balladry, to which the pianos formed a remote and intermittently allusive background. Because of those pianos and because of the fact that the young man did not sing extraordinarily well—he looked stupid, unhappy and rather helpless despite his breastplate, crown, scepter

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and golden hair—the group at the table did not easily distinguish at first what he was singing about; Felicia thought possibly he sung in German or some other foreign tongue. Presently, however, she got used to it, and it became clear that he was a prince "from an island beyond the foam" and that his wicked stepmother had prevailed with the king his father to have him exiled. Not only this, but because of his father's power no other nation would give him refuge, and in all the wide world he had only this ship for home, to sail the seas with till he died. His song was very lonely and sad even though he did not sing well, and presently the mermaids themselves rose to the surface and poked their heads through to listen. ("Ah," said the Marquess with satisfaction, as though he had been holding his own breath. "They are real nevertheless," said Mme. Mastaba.)

And now there came through the clear water from the coral castle in the distance a new mermaid. This one wore, like the young prince, a crown, and she too rose to the surface to hear his song. Upon seeing this creature the young man became more passionate in his declamation; nowhere in the world, on land or at sea, was there woman half so beautiful as she. He stretched forth his scepter, and in a burst of exalted and flourishing song declared that she alone must be his bride. The pianos rumbled loudly at this.

"He is quite Wagnerian, with his bare knees," said Mr. le Mesurier.

The mermaid princess now made her reply, singing in a voice cool and steady as a night wind off the water. She was indeed a beautiful woman, or mermaid, with very white skin and with long, black hair which even though wet curled in reptilian folds about her breasts and back. She would be his bride, she sang, but she could never leave the sea which was her home. She pitied his exile, but alas, they were doomed, the two of them, to eternal separation by the elements they breathed.

The young prince, hearing this, declared, still singing, that if he could not have her to wife the world held nothing more to please him—an exile and alone, condemned to sail forever across the seven seas. To have her love what might he better do than die, so be he died in her white arms? All this he sang in a voice which was evidently becoming somewhat distressed with fatigue.

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The mermaid princess sternly yet perhaps a little coyly forbade him the death he so eloquently sought; while she sang she provocatively waved those white arms, making her breasts move just below the surface of the water. The hero, with an artificial vehemence and ferocity very convincing, insisted. She again imperiously denied. This went on, in the form of a duet, for some time.

"It is a little boring, *tout ce* Papageno-Papagena," said Mme. Mastaba, "but the spectacle is brilliant."

Felicia agreed. Charmed at first, she had very quickly become bored as the two lovers passed this theme back and forth between them, while the pianos went on like stones bouncing down a hill. The whole scene rapidly began to seem ridiculous, not least because the labored healthy earnestness of the young man contrasted so unfavorably with the cool, queenly demeanor and effortless voice of the mermaid. Because she was bored, Felicia paid, finally, not much heed to the course of all these antics, and was in fact lighting a cigarette at just the moment when—with a theatrical scream of loving anguish and a somewhat awkward splash—the young prince cast away scepter and crown and leapt into the water, into the embrace of his mermaid sweetheart. And she? What did she do? Felicia was quite in time to see that she, her long white arms fixed firmly around her lover's middle, her silver tail flashing in one powerful turn and dive, dragged him away below. The audience, leaning over the edge of the pool, had a clear view of his silent writhings, kickings and strugglings, accompanied by chains of bubbles from the air in his clothing and one final chain of bubbles from the air in his lungs; after this—it had taken over a minute—he lay still at the entrance of the coral castle, until presently a cortege of mermaids swam down and carried him away, while on distant pianos empty octaves bounded angrily up and down their deserted, echoing stairwells. Then all was over, and the underwater light began to fade. It was oddly noticeable that scepter and crown, made of some light materials, still floated on the surface; but soon all was dark on the water, dark and opaque and resuming the reflexion of the moonlight.

"So you see," said Mme. Mastaba, laughing, to the Marquess, "the mermaids were real, after all."

Felicia saw that her husband had got very red in the face. So he had not been expecting it either, she thought, and made herself smile as at some remote and secret thought.

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"How did you like it, my dear?" inquired Mr. le Mesurier, putting his bony old hand upon hers. Felicia turned the smile in his direction.

"I thought it was quite sweet, really," she said, "but maybe just a little too long."

Mr. Aiken Drum coughed.

"It is doubtless on account of the expense," he said. "They prolong it deliberately, to make the most of the materials."

"I find it," said Mr. le Mesurier, "an ominously romantic conception. That is, after all, not the kind of world we live in today. It is more like—like this Valkyrie's headpiece," he added, indicating the Marquess's helmet with the horsehair crest.

"Ah, but there will always be romance," said Mme. Mastaba profoundly sighing. "No matter what they do to the poor world, there will be romance."

"It is hard to believe," said Mr. Aiken Drum, "it is hard to believe that we are at war once again. Reality is harsh, after this fairyland." He gestured broadly toward the dark pool beside them.

"It cannot go on forever," said Mr. le Mesurier. "Before we know it we shall meet again, perhaps here in this very place."

"We are old," said Mme. Mastaba. "The world may never again be as we know it. But there will be romance for the young, will there not, Felicia?"

But Felicia had not heard, She sat very straight, with the smile of a great lady playing distantly upon her face, and was caught in a vision, wherein she saw her husband and herself, he wearing the helmet that lay there on the table, flying alone in the silent aircraft, high in the dark night, back to the stone towers and the stately trees of Yore. In her mind's eye, then, she saw herself walking endlessly through silent corridors hung with portraits, and down the sweeping curve of a grand staircase, all in the silence. The silence continued, it seemed for years.

"What are you thinking, my dear?" asked the Marquess. Abruptly Felicia came to the surface of her dream.

"I was thinking," she said with a laugh both grand and gay, "that if there's anything in the world I love, it's reality."

And though the Marquess seemed confused for a moment, the elders laughed indulgently. Then they all had more of the bitter wine from seaweed.

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JOSEPH KERMAN

Opera à la mode

In a moment it will be time to offer applause, as well as a modest proposal, to the authors of *The Rake's Progress*. But first let us ask the most important question: what is the opera actually trying to do? *The Rake's Progress* is a comedy—but that's part of the trouble; we had better leave that for a while. The *Rake* is a fable, in Auden's and Stravinsky's terminology; a fable of sin and redemption, written from the point of view of our time, in an eighteenth-century setting, and with an undertone of classic myth. The plot is derived ingeniously, ironically, and perhaps over-literally from the series of paintings by Hogarth that give the opera its name. But we might start with the myth, for this is indicated quietly at the very opening of the work, and assumes importance in the conclusion.

The libretto begins with a country tableau; a pair of lovers singing of "the festival of May":

ANNE: . . . The pious earth observes the solemn year.
TOM: Now is the season when the Cyprian Queen
With genial charm translates our mortal scene . . .

This is high talk for Hogarth's Tom Rakewell, and there is a strong ritual quality to this opening duet. Spring rites celebrate the annual return of Adonis from the underworld, and the lovers are preparing to re-enact the story of Venus and Adonis, in a new interpretation. Adonis, a beautiful youth beloved of Aphrodite, rejects her love because he wishes to be free and devote himself to the pleasures of the chase; this life destroys him, but he is half-redeemed by the goddess, and brough back to earth for six months of every year. We are to see Tom reject Anne Trulove in order to follow his desire for freedom and pleasure in the brothels, fairs, and on the Stock Exchange of London. In "a year and a day" he is in the clutch of Hades, represented by his serving-man Nick Shadow, but is half-redeemed by Anne's love (not with a clear temporal division, as in the myth, but a simultaneous one; he is both on earth and in hell at the same time, that is, insane). In Bedlam Tom imagines himself Adonis in Hades, surrounded by Minos, Orpheus and others, awaiting the return of Aphrodite.

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It is spring again, and she comes. But then she leaves for good; now we need the eighteenth-century story, and the twentieth-century moral.

Shadow is only half pagan shade; his Christian name is Nick, and the more important Christian fable is superimposed on the classic legend. Characteristically, Auden examines the soul of his Adonis, and enlists comedy, pathos and lyricism to the task of turning our sympathies to him. The search for freedom and pleasure, it develops, is complex, equivocal, and very little fun. Tom can be resolute enough in the country, but when he comes with Nick to his first temptation he draws back, and has to be tricked into taking the plunge. He already half-repents, and continues to do so at every new step of his downward path, on which, indeed, he can only be propelled by the ingenuity of his domestic Satan. Tom is a weakling, but we must count it an act of bravery when, at the final reckoning, he throws away weakness and pride and trusts to Anne's love, bets on the apparently impossible Queen of Hearts, and cheats Nick Shadow just as Shadow had cheated him in the first act. The Rake's progress, in other words, is first of all a proving, a preparation for Aphrodite, whom he finally wishes and deserves too late. His worldly search for pleasure and freedom is shown to be continuously vain.

This much is projected with great skill and beauty, and is the lasting dramatic strength of the opera. The resolution though is not immediately clear, in either Christian or pagan terms. Auden's intention, as I understand it, was to present a Christian criticism of the myth. "All men are mad," says Baba in the Epilogue, and so perhaps all men, like mad Tom o' Bedlam, will hope pathetically for a redemption such as Aphrodite obtained for Adonis. But the life of pleasure involves grave responsibility; there is no redemption without repentance and confession, and there can be no redemption on this earth. Anne does come once again to comfort Tom in the madhouse—perhaps simply as a fulfilment in dramatic terms of the redemption actually accomplished earlier, by Tom's own act of faith. But after they have renewed their mutual trust, Anne departs with these words, whose drab versification is beautifully matched in the music:

> Tom, my vow
> Holds ever, but it is no longer I
> You need. Sleep well, my dearest dear. Good-bye.

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DUETTINO: Every wearied body must
Late or soon return to dust,
Set the homesick spirit free.
In this earthly city we
Shall not meet again, love, yet
Never think that I forget.
TRULOVE: God is merciful and just,
God ordains what ought to be,
But a father's eyes are wet.

Unlike Aphrodite, Anne leaves Tom to presumptive purgatory, revealing a hitherto undisclosed, no doubt hereditary strain of stern country morality. And Tom himself dies without understanding.

The trouble with this resolution is not that it is inappropriate or banal, or that it is *per se* undramatic, but that it is not articulated with the same dramatic art that carries the rest of the opera. It can only be implied from a close (and sympathetic) reading of libretto; it is not projected in operatic terms. So crucial a matter as the termination of the Rake's progress cannot be merely hinted at in recitative; the main characters have to be properly—musically—involved with it. This was impossible for Tom, who has lost his mind, and whose ravings cannot reflect his feelings about salvation, suffering, Anne's departure, or the meaning of his ordeal. If anything, one has the impression that Tom, still fancying himself as Adonis, may be saved in spite of himself, and in spite of the general un-Christian gloom at the prospect. Involvement was not impossible for Anne, and it is less clear why her role had to be so inconclusive here, unless Auden was really uninterested in her. Through Anne we might have apprehended Tom's fate, but she is curiously dumb; since her renunciation is not presented as saintly, it produces simply a dry effect—and heretofore Anne has not been a dry person at all. As a result, neither Tom nor Anne touches the essential theme of redemption on which the play was presumably intended to culminate. Instead there is an undifferentiated aura of elegy, moving in itself, but inarticulate as to the consummation that we have been led to expect.

After the graveyard and Bedlam scenes it is really impossible to slight the earnestness of the main business, as the Epilogue may seem to do. As clearly as in *Don Giovanni,* the platitudes delivered there are irrelevant to the essential action and moral. In both

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operas, it was necessary to try to re-establish the responses of comedy, dangerously weakened in the previous tableau; this was I think not quite feasible in either. It may pass for Hogarthian, this gay, smug recital of the proverb "The Devil finds work for idle hands". But it does not have Hogarth's lively cruelty; Auden made a decisive, ironic departure from the eighteenth-century view when he pitied the Rake and set about analyzing him and rationalizing him. In this frame of reference it is vain for the Epilogue nervously to mock moralizing, as though to gloss over the ambiguity of the true moral to our fable. That true conclusion has been left dramatically, if not rationally, in doubt.

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Now that this ambiguity has been noted, I have said about all that I am inclined to say against the opera. Although the ending is a mistake, and a sufficiently serious one, the *Rake* in spite of it seems to me the most genuine and the most delightful work for the theatre in years, to say nothing of its being an operatic masterpiece on almost any terms. The attack that tradition demands meet each new work by Stravinsky has this time been mainly deflected to W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, who have had their knuckles sharply rapped by testy music critics, especially in this country. I myself think that the librettists' part in the opera has been only slightly less brilliant than Stravinsky's, and that indeed the work offers a unique delight to the combined musical and poetic sensibilities. To speak first of those aspects that are primarily the concern of the poets, my applause would extend to their central conception of the hero, to their plot construction, to their artful dramatic organization on its several levels, to their highly "musical" versification, and to the quality of the poetry throughout.

But the very conception of Auden's Tom Rakewell has stuck in the throat of many critics; for them he is not significantly a rake at all. To be sure, Tom is not involved in so titillating a series of misadventures as his prototype in the pictures, or even as Mozart's grander libertine, but this is hardly enough to disqualify him from dramatic presentation. The real trouble is that many have gone to the opera expecting another Don Giovanni, an understandable anticipation in view of the well-advertised Mozartian references in both score and libretto. Tom Rakewell, however, is someone much more complicated, more a figure for

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our time. He and Don Juan may belong to the same family, together with Mr. Punch, Faust, Shaw's John Tanner and the Stravinsky-Ramuz Soldier, but this family is fundamentally split on the matter of conscience. Punch and Don Juan have none; they do not change, and their dissoluteness and punishment are both handled unequivocally (*Don Giovanni* is admirably subtitled *Il dissoluto punito*). Faust and Rakewell do have consciences; they pass through definite progresses, which are intrinsically more interesting than the records of their errors, and their sins and retribution are to varying degrees equivocal. Rakewell is distinguished from Faust by his vacillation and weak character; this should not keep him off the stage either. You may say that neither Faust nor Rakewell is possible today as a subject for comedy, unless the author disengage the sympathies, like Shaw. Indeed it is a question whether Don Juan is still a comic possibility, after Kierkegaard and Byron. But leaving aside the matter of comedy, Rakewell's case has all necessary urgency, timeliness, universality and pathos, to say nothing of an honorable tradition.

A priori objection to Tom as a dramatic figure is as absurd as Hanslick's mincing suggestion that the Othello story is too distasteful to be made into a decent opera. The only point is whether poet and composer can present him to us convincingly. In Auden's libretto the progress of the half-repentant Rake is direct, economical, well-shaped and undeflected by secondary material. It is arranged around three wishes which he is granted by Nick Shadow, who does not foresee that a fourth wish, for Anne, will save Tom in the end. In the country, Tom's callow desire is for money and the pleasures it will buy, but after the brothel incident this palls, and Tom's understanding deepens. As he wishes more generally for happiness, Nick persuades him to marry Baba the Turk, a freak from St. Giles' Fair, not on the basis of gratification of the senses, but in order to exercise his noble gift of freedom; happiness comes only with freedom from the twin dictates of lust and conscience. Tom, never very clever, falls for this topical philosophy, but it proves altogether vain. Finally Shadow can incline him to wickedness only by appealing to his sentimental better nature—a low blow; the bread-making machine, Tom wishes and prays, may save his soul by spreading so much benefit in the world. For all this time he has been telling himself, with characteristic weakness, that he is so far damned

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that he can never return to Anne, even though she offers to forgive. Tom's lyric arias and ariosi throughout, words and music, present a carefully graded progression from the trite thoughtlessness of the first scene to the awareness and crucial act of faith in the graveyard scene near the end. Of course Tom is a little self-piteous; we laugh a little at that too. "How handsomely he cries!" say the Whores in Act I, ii.

The record of Tom's progress is not deflected, as I grasp the play, by the sub-plot of Baba, around which most of the humor turns. We may surely allow Auden his satire in having Tom assert his freedom by marrying; he might have done so in some other way, of course, but this arrangement, besides being rather funny in itself, has considerable value for the rest of the plot. If Anne was to do anything in the opera besides open and close it, she had to appear in the middle, and about the only thing Auden could have her do was chase after Tom in London (as in Hogarth—there to the point of tiresomeness). But then would not weak, repentant Tom go back to her, and foil Shadow ahead of time? That would destroy the plot; and mere whoring will not deflect level-headed, determined girls like Anne. The only situation that can set her back (temporarily) is for her to find Tom married to someone else; and as Anne is temporarily set back, Tom careers downward all the more clearly and dramatically. Auden nicely collects up loose ends with Baba, for later she befriends the wavering Anne, and gives her the final encouragement to seek out Tom again, even though he had married another. Stravinsky rises to this occasion. Anne's epiphanic realization—

> He loves me still! Then I alone
> In weeping doubt have been untrue . . .

is one of the most eloquent spots in the score. Potentially Anne is a fine character, much better than Hogarth's quite different girl, and it is a shame to have her evaporate at the end. Baba, however, is incisively and completely drawn, and her role seems to me at every step coordinated to the main plot. The suspicions of exotic pleasures that Tom is presumably to taste with the circus freak are amusingly dispelled; remember that it is only after the marriage and the scene with Anne that we learn (right at the curtain of Act II, ii) that Baba is in fact a bearded lady; heretofore we had only the dark information that "brave warriors who never flinched at the sound of musketry have swooned after a

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mere glance of her". In the following domestic scene Baba is revealed as a perfect caricature of commonplace womanhood. It is hard to know what is more dreadful, her chatter, her tantrum, or her saccharine little love song. But, as a parody of the eternal verities of show business, Baba has the inevitable heart of gold.

She also has the last laugh; and it is a matter of some importance that we always laugh at Tom in this opera. Each step of his descent is made to seem pointless in laughter: Mother Goose's brothel is a carefully childish affair; the un-exotic Baba makes his life miserable; and the "excellent machine" which deceives him is ludicrous. It is probably obvious enough that this use of humor is diametrically opposed to that in *Don Giovanni*, where the fun is always turned against Don Giovanni's victims; we always laugh *with* him—even when he himself is fooled, for he always sees the joke (unlike Tom, who has absolutely no sense of humor[1]). Our attitudes towards these two protagonists are hardly determined by their actions, and their degree of objective rakishness; as a matter of fact Tom's actions are just about as wicked as Don Giovanni's, coldly considered. Our different modes of sympathy are determined most strongly by the different directions of the comedy. We regard Tom always with amusement, and with some compound of pity and impatience, whereas Don Giovanni gains our somewhat surreptitious admiration.

A central theme with possibilities that are subtle and rich, and a well-structured plot to articulate it—these would have been expected from a dramatic poet of Auden's experience and sensitivity. What might not have been expected is the masterly construction on the more detailed level, the organization of scenes and arias designed for musical treatment. At every point this shows a very rare understanding of musico-dramatic necessities. On the one extreme, Auden achieved real *tours de force* of continuous ensemble writing in his auction and graveyard scenes, recalling in brilliance that virtuoso-opera *Die Meistersinger*, whose libretto fairly creaks with such ingenuity. On the other extreme, he was bold enough to write, as Act I, iii, a scene of the most artificial and conventional type possible: a modern example of that early nineteenth-century sop to the prima donna, the scene consisting exclusively of aria and cabaletta, that is, a reflective aria followed by a change of mood and then a brilliant decisive

[1]Tom's one witticism, "I've buried her", is a real lemon.

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aria or cabaletta ("Quietly, night", "I go to him". Compare end of Act I or beginning of Act II in *Traviata*). There never was anything wrong with such scenes, if handled with intelligence. Here Stravinsky helped by making a rather abrupt ending to "Quietly, night", which gives a sense of continuity, and then by writing his "cabaletta" as a delightful parody of an old da-capo aria, complete with coloratura, repeated cadences, and an absurdly formal little modulation for the central section. *Opera buffa* from Pergolesi to Arthur Sullivan and Johann Strauss has always lived on parody of serious opera. Mozart's Fiordiligi comes especially to mind, and we love both her and Anne the more for their slightly ridiculous but so human excesses of emotion.

Between these two limits, Auden shows as much variety as skill in construction. He includes several splendid ensembles, a patter aria, a duet-finale (*La Serva padrona*), a vaudeville (*Die Entführung*), a little procession to end a scene (*Figaro, Tosca*), a dream, a lullaby, a choral elegy, and plenty of striking clocks. I would care to criticize one detail only, a somewhat wasteful distribution of arias in the first two acts. In Act I, ii, Tom is last seen singing the melancholy cavatina "Love, too frequently betrayed"; his next appearance is at the start of Act II, singing the melancholy aria "Vary the song". With all their differences, these are close enough in feeling to seem redundant, for we have not seen the singer in between; there has been no change presented to us in dramatic terms. Add to this that at the very end of Act I Anne sings her vigorous aria, "I go to him", and is next seen at the start of Act II, ii, singing the similarly vigorous "O heart, be stronger". This results in some dragging. However it should be said that Auden never intended this second aria of Anne's, but in its place only some recitative; Stravinsky for good reasons of his own forced this into an aria, not without quite a wrestle with the poetic material. Here is Auden's recitative verse, and Stravinsky's musical arrangement diagrammed with it:

INTRODUCTION *and* RECITATIVE:

c min. How strange! although the heart for love dare
everything,
The hand draws back to it and finds
No spring of courage. London! Alone! seems
all that it can say.

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"ARIOSO":
A: b min. O heart, be stronger, that what this coward hand
Wishes beyond all bravery, the touch of his,
May bring its daring to a close, unneeded,
And love be all your bounty.
B: E flat No step in fear shall wander nor in weakness delay;
Hear thou or not, merciful Heaven, ease thou or not my way;
A: c min. A love that is sworn before Thee can plunder Hell of its prey.
B: E flat *No step in fear shall wander, nor in weakness delay.*

Stravinsky repeats his music for lines 4-6 ("A") a semitone higher for one single line, line 10; this involves a good deal of word repetition and does not result in convincing declamation. Thereupon line 8 is repeated, words and music ("B"), in order to round things out. Whether on account of this awkwardness or not, "O heart, be stronger" seems to me the one unsuccessful number in the score. Strangely, it is closest to Stravinsky's older disjunct style and disjointed declamation, in sharp contrast to the rest of the *Rake*. Anne seems for a moment dehumanized; she sings like a ballet-ized puppet, not like the person we have sensed in her other music. Perhaps Stravinsky finds it hard to engage in any non-comic sentiment that is to be forceful; there is no sense of parody, as in "I go to him", but of artificially stimulated vigor.

Incidentally, his good reason for creating an aria here was that Auden has the line "A love that is sworn before Thee . . . " recur at the climax of the graveyard scene; as Tom hears it (off-stage) he resolves to trust Anne, and bets on the Queen of Hearts which proves Nick Shadow's undoing. Stravinsky naturally had to have a musical recapitulation here, but could not trust it if these words were not originally presented forcefully; not in mere recitative or even in arioso, but in a sort of aria, and what is more with their music repeated somehow for added emphasis. (The aria at this place allowed him further to bolster Anne's role, and also to re-articulate the important tonal relationship b-minor to c-minor.) But I am afraid that if the music for "A love that is sworn" seems stilted at its first appearance, it seems all the more so at its recapitulation, and really flaws an otherwise magnificent scene.

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Where Auden does intend an aria, or a static ensemble, he ordinarily writes a short stanzaic poem, which Stravinsky matches with a rather free strophic musical setting. In the poems, Auden molds stanza to stanza with the greatest art, to give the musician every assistance; sentiments flow directly and slowly, so that the meaning is not attenuated in the musical setting, which is necessarily less nimble than the verse itself. There are no doubt some exceptions to this, just as one might point out other places where Stravinsky distorts the poetic material; virtuosos like Auden and Stravinsky must find it hard to restrain their purely poetic and musical instincts. But for the most part the union between words and music seems to me magically right—declamation and all. And this brings us, tardily I know, to what is the first stunning thing about the *Rake:* the extraordinary experience of hearing first-class English verse and fine music working together from the stage. It is faintest praise to observe that no other opera has been written in English with anything like the same effect. I suppose that those of us who are not entirely at home with French, German and Italian ought to keep our mouths shut, but I cannot help wondering whether there ever has been an opera with so elegant-sounding a libretto. The point, friends, is not that W. H. Auden is necessarily the authentic Shakespeare of our age, but that he may very well outdo Rinuccini, Metastasio, Quinault, Boito, Wagner, Maeterlinck, Hofmannsthal, Brecht, and Cocteau. Nor has any of these writers been better served by his composer. A ponderous great deal has been written about the mystic wedding of words and music. In our language we have been able to sense this only from short lyrics, and perhaps from some masques. To Mr. Auden and Mr. Kallman we owe our first knowledge of it in the drama.

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Stravinsky has his particular magic too. Never has he written a score that glistens of virtuosity so completely, or so stilly. But whereas his earlier music has often revealed the high sheen of polished precision machinery, there is in the *Rake* a new humane luminescence, which has evidently been widely observed. The newness is perhaps clearest in comparison with the one work that comes to mind more frequently than any other when listening to the opera: *Pulcinella,* the little ballet after Pergolesi which aggra-

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vated critics of the 1920's. *Pulcinella* is as crisp as slapstick; it is a more perfect embodiment of the comedy of masks even than Pergolesi, and incidentally reveals more about the music it parodies than any written accounts or analyses I know. But the *Rake* presents a comedy of people, like the operas of Mozart. The four main characters are not masks, ballet figures, types or symbols, but people as alive as Susanna or Tamino or Donna Elvira or Fiordiligi. The sense of this reality, so crucial to one's response to the opera, can I know only be asserted and not demonstrated, with the *Rake* as with the Mozart operas. But as with them, phrases remain in the mind like sudden intimate memories of a person's word or tone or gesture—"He loves me still! then I alone . . .", "Oh God, what hopes have I?", "Venus, my queen, my bride—at last", "Be thanked, for masterless should I abide / Too long, I soon would die." In the important arias there is that quality of truth that music seems to be able to supply, which can make a pathetically wooden figure like Beethoven's Florestan into an intensely touching and full dramatic personality. Basically, I suppose, this results from a certain great sympathy, and an ability to recreate, mirror, or symbolize emotional responses in the specific forms of musical expression—the sort of thing that is sternly excluded from Stravinsky's well-known philosophy of music.

It is easier to confess that we never expected this sense of depth from Stravinsky than to understand how he has accomplished it. Perhaps it is related to a relaxation in this work of his heretofore characteristic musical style. As I tried to put it a few years ago[2], Stravinsky's distinctive peculiarity is a kind of musical stratification, which occurs both in his counterpoint (looking at the score vertically) and in his concept of form (looking at the score horizontally, and hearing how the piece extends itself in time). His works are made up of level, disparate and even incongruous sections juxtaposed without preparation or transition; the sections may be quite long, or as short as a beat or two, and are marked off by sharp breaks in instrumental color, or sudden shifts in key-center, or by rhythmic interruptions—Stravinsky has as many ways of arranging them as a painter has with planes of flat color. The musical sections are in a sense flat, though this of course no more implies lifelessness than it does for Cézanne;

[2]THE HUDSON REVIEW, Vol. III, No. 1 (Spring, 1950), pp. 124-131.

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Stravinsky eliminates tension within them melodically, rhythmically, and harmonically, as though to exaggerate their apposition one to another. This at any rate was what one could detect in the music of the 1920's and 30's; but later in that essay I mentioned casually that in the latest works there were some passages (the *pas de deux* in *Orpheus*) where this disjunct technique was very much toned down. This has turned out to be more prophetic than the quip that Stravinsky's declamation was likely to destroy Auden's poetry. For the *Rake* differs from Stravinsky's earlier work in that the musical sections are much longer and less flat in themselves. Where the typical Stravinskian shifts occur, they are generally correlated to changes in the dramatic action, as is the classical manner. In short, the whole style is less extreme. And let us do Stravinsky the courtesy of regarding this neither as a betrayal nor as a return to the fold nor as a newest pose, but simply as a solution to the particular expressive problem set up by the present material.

The texture of the long sections is in any case more homogeneous than any other music written since around 1750, and on this account there is a certain affinity between the *Rake* and music of the time of Hogarth, Bach, and Pergolesi. This seems to me so in spite of the more obvious bows to Mozart, Gluck, Bellini and Tschaikowski. What flattens the texture most decisively, still, is Stravinsky's resolute refusal to modulate, especially to the dominant key, in a forceful, exciting, "dramatic" fashion; as with Bach, original tonic keys refuse to be seriously ruffled. Modulation of the forceful kind has always been anathema to Stravinsky, who dislikes Beethoven and Wagner (but not Mozart, it appears) on account of their whole-hearted development of its possibilities. Historically speaking, the present style is shrewdly chosen for an opera committed to the idea of the aria. The *opera seria* aria of Scarlatti and Handel was intended to be psychologically static, a formal "emotion" in soliloquy which could best be managed, at least in theory, by the musical style of that period, which depended more on interior elaboration than interior progress, contrast and excitement. The later modulatory style of Mozart and Haydn grew up in order to harmonize relatively strong contrasts; it was associated with contrasting keys, contrasting second subjects in sonata form, and psychological conflicts in the opera. Thus it made possible a great operatic invention, the moving en-

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semble, in which complex action could be incorporated within a musical continuity. But Mozart and Beethoven met corresponding problems when they came to write static soliloquies. With admirable logic, Wagner stopped writing arias altogether, developing instead long integrated passages for the solo singer during which elaborate psychological progresses are supposed to take place; perhaps the greatest is the "Delirium" from the third act of *Tristan.* As for Bellini and Verdi, they renounced the Beethovenian style for their arias, and wrote static pieces again, though of a much simpler variety than Handel would have dared to use. They simply used tunes; it took the Romantics to make anything that serious out of a tune. Stravinsky follows neither example, but simulates the emotionally level aria of the earlier time by characteristically modern means.

As an important incidental result of this extended static writing, the fact that certain pieces are in certain keys, and stay there, is particularly clear, clearer than in almost any other operatic music known today. It is natural for a composer to plan to derive significance from facts of this kind. Consequently we find that the *Rake* is organized tonally down to the last modulation; it is more rigorously organized, perhaps, than any other tonal opera. In the following summary of the main outlines of this scheme, some technicalities have been inevitable (capital letters are used for major keys, small ones for minor keys).

Act I: The Prelude, a fanfare on E recalling the Monteverdi *Orfeo,* leads into A for the first scene. A becomes the central key, and the dominant relationship E—A assumes basic importance. After Anne has sung the first stanza in A, Tom shifts abruptly to G for his stanza. The Quartet that concludes sc. i returns to A; but at the very end, as Shadow steps out to the audience to remark "The PROGRESS OF A RAKE begins!", there is again the abrupt shift to G. This step, A—G, seems well established now.

Sc. ii, the brothel, opens in C. The Roaring Boys sing in C, the Whores in B♭; this forms a parallel to the step A—G in sc. i and completes the complex A—C / G—B♭ which is structurally important in the opera. But the scene ends safely in A.

Anne's scene (sc. iii) opens in a-minor; her first Aria

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is in b, her second in C. So the scene moves up the scale, a—b—C, clarifying the progression A—C which has been articulated by the act as a whole.

Act II: Tom's opening Aria in B♭ insists on ending in G. Its contrasting middle section works its way upward obviously from G—A♭—a—b♭—b; the reprise of the first part is again in B♭, closing oddly, weakly, in G. This transitory rising is characteristic of the whole second act. Sc. ii begins in c (with Anne; c—b—c again, as has been mentioned) and then moves up to D, which is Baba's key; sc. iii moves up from D to E♭ (note the last words of the act, "I've buried her", on the notes D—E♭, derived from Tom's cadence to the Duet "Thanks to this excellent device"). And Act III is to begin in E.

Act III: This brings us full circle; the auction scene (sc. i) begins and ends in E, though there are wide deviations, notably to Tom's key B♭ for the Ballad Tune which he sings off-stage with Shadow. E is poised for resolution to the central tonic, A.

But sc. ii, the graveyard, does not yet resolve; it stands as a great interruption of this expected progression. Up to now, Stravinsky has anxiously stressed continuity between scenes by making the relation between the end of one and the beginning of the next extremely direct: in Act I, G—C and A—a; in Act II, G—c and D—d. But after the E-major ending of Act III, i, sc. ii opens evilly in b♭, the most remote (and for this piece, the most unusual) conjunction possible. The dialogue between Tom and Nick oscillates around b♭ and G, again, but works around to f# and b. Then the rescue-song of Anne, off-stage, is in C; the step b—C has been Anne's twice before. Tom triumphantly echoes C; Nick's great exit is back to b♭, and Tom, cursed, obediently repeats B♭.

Another abrupt, unusual key-shift opens sc. iii, in Bedlam: B♭—A. Thus the cadence E (sc. i)—A (sc. iii) is fulfilled, and the graveyard scene is carefully set off from the rest; B♭ disjunctly enclosed by E and A. The next number is in C, restating the movement A—C of

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Act I. As Anne enters, Tom reaches G; their Duet of reconcilation glides from g into B♭. It incorporates a strong A♭, which is emphasized by the following Lullaby. Then the Duettino with which Anne and Trulove take their leave is a cleanly polytonal piece, half in B♭, half in G, ending in G. The Mourning Chorus naturally has to come in a, and the Epilogue brightens, and iterates A major.

As a whole the opera is seen to exhibit a tonal coherence that is wholly classical in its principle. Act I establishes A and then the relatively close key of C, via the dominant G. Act II opens in a B♭—G domain and moves episodically, and with mounting excitement, up to a prolonged E-major in Act III, i. This prepares the all-important recapitulation to A in sc. iii; and within this final scene B♭ and G are encompassed, rationalized, exorcised. But the graveyard scene acts as a climax, a point of maximum tension, since it interrupts the main rhythm and delays the resolution. On this pattern several significant though less fundamental relationships are superimposed.

That Stravinsky intended all this there can of course be no doubt, any more than that Alban Berg wrote into *Wozzeck* what he took to be a pavane and a fugue and a movement in sonata-form *inter alia*. For critics of a certain kind, this is at once to be understood as the true key to the excellence of the work (provided that they like it in the first place). Actually it raises a host of difficult questions. Are these elements heard? if so by whom—by musicians trained in a specially-directed analytical procedure, or by the opera audience? are they instrinsic, "natural", or do we learn to hear any relationships that any composer inserts in his music? what is the balance between heard factors and intellectually known ones in the aesthetic experience of music? if not consciously heard, do these elements penetrate the mind subliminally? if they are not experienced in any way, does the opera suffer? essentially? appreciably? if not, why bother? Such questions are rarely asked or recognized as questions, much less answered or agreed on, and they are not to be answered here. Without implying any prejudgements, I repeat that "key areas" in this opera are unusually static and straightforward to the ear, and that

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Stravinsky's way of changing key by means of bald juxtaposition, rather than by the smoother process of genuine modulation, puts long-range relationships between them in the simplest possible auditory form. To the extent that it is achieved tonally, the climactic effect of the graveyard scene should I think be apparent to anyone who would be aware that, say, the central section of the Adagio of the Schubert C-major Quintet is very specially placed. (In Schubert that section is in f minor, as contrasted with the E major of the beginning; in Stravinsky the larger scene is set off from the rest of the act by the unnatural intrusion of its B♭ between E and A.) The return to A for the Bedlam scene should be heard as a "recapitulation" by anyone who knows this effect from a Beethoven symphony, and should thereby enhance the dramatic idea of Spring's return in the cycle of Adonis. The scene is already marked off by the abrupt shift from B♭ to A that introduces it, but in best classical fashion Stravinsky also recalls the instrumental color of Act I, i, and, though not precisely, also the thematic material: one motive of an alternating minor and major third, and another of a descending arpeggio in even quarter-notes, E′—C#′—C#. Sooner or later, the listener will begin to associate the key when Tom sings with the sound of the key a minor third below or above (B♭ and G). Musical sections in the striking half-step relationship are heard at each of Anne's appearances (b—C, g—A♭). Ultimately I would suppose that these effects are different only in degree, not in kind, from something as straightforward as a change in mode from minor to major. Presumably no-one misses the bright effect made by the A major of the Epilogue in relation to the a minor of the preceding Mourning Chorus.

Along with the organization in key goes (as usual) a system of musical repetitions. The main point to be made about these, I believe, is that almost all of them were planned in order to set in relief the graveyard scene. It is here that the greatest number of strands from earlier points in the opera are pulled together—as though to indicate, perhaps, Tom's highest level of self-awareness. There are the church-bells striking twelve, interrupted by Nick Shadow; a reminder of the silly cuckoo-clock of the brothel, where Tom's fall began, and, subtly, of Nick's deception there to be matched by Tom's success now. As Tom resolves to trust Anne, there is the plainest reference to both her decisive arias in the

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earlier acts, "I go to him" and "O heart, be stronger". Tom's fourth wish, for Anne, is like the other three wishes spoken, not sung, and associtaed with a harpsichord arpeggio; this particular unification, however, was probably better in mind than in realization. The arpeggio has to do with Nick Shadow, the granter of wishes, and it seems to have grown during the long harpsichord solos which accompany the excruciating game of chance. The whole scene is further linked to the preceding (auction) and following (Bedlam) scenes by means of the Ballad Tune first heard during the auction, sung off-stage by the carousing Tom and Nick: "If boys had wings and girls had stings", "Who cares a fig for Tory or Whig?" (in B♭). As they enter the graveyard, a curious halting ritornello is heard (g); soon afterwards Nick reveals himself to the melody of the Ballad (in G).[3] When Tom is struck mad, he childishly sings the Ballad again to close the scene, now directly connected with a *majore* version of that ritornello (B♭). Then the ritornello, alone, is used as the end of the Duet in the Bedlam scene, the most transcendental moment of the opera, in both words and music (B♭). Thus the graveyard scene is emphasized in many ways: by its own intrinsic density, by the eerie insrtumental color of the harpsichord, by the density of thematic recollections, and by the tonal organization. This climactic use of thematic density, if Stravinsky will forgive us, brings to mind passages such as Tristan's "Delirium", though of course his treatment of repeated fragments is otherwise different from that of the typical Wagnerian leitmotive.

The key plan and the system of musical repetitions have their effect on the listener's response to the opera as a whole, as do many other smaller technical matters, which seem, as always with Stravinsky, to consummate and refine stylistic qualities of his earlier works. But in the last analysis, say simply that it is the beauty of the individual arias and static ensembles that forms the primary entrancement of the opera. This is as it always has been with the best operas. The dazzling lyrical fertility that Stravinsky reveals here is also not exactly new, but never before has it taken hold unencumbered, with the sweep and ease and surety that it has in the *Rake*. Sentiment is neither desiccated nor cloyed, and there is a kind of consciousness and intelligence about it all that does indeed recall Mozart, in spite of the general un-Mozartian

[3]The poetry here is a little in the style of a broadside ballad.

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pall. The opera reveals a fine progression in the quality of the lyricism. After the painful intensity of the graveyard scene, how exquisite the arias become at the end: the last Duet between Tom and Anne, with its breathless beating of the air over the concluding tonic pedal, Anne's gentle Lullaby with the flutes, the tiny dissonant Duettino on a ground-bass as Anne and Trulove depart, and the austere monotone elegy of the Madmen's Mourning Chorus. Then, in the Epilogue, as lights flare on and the characters step out in front of the curtain and take off their wigs and beards, Stravinsky puts on his Pulcinella-mask, which Picasso has drawn for us. Now it is the brittle glitter of farce, which no composer has ever done so well. The spoofing vaudeville exit at the very end seems to trace an authentic continuity from the famous Pantalones and Arlequinos of the *commedia dell'arte* to the television clowns of today.

But as the music grows in eloquence, the dramatic meaning clouds over, attenuates, and then is lost. Tom's presumptive return to reason in the Duet remains cryptic, for the sad Duettino cuts off Anne when she might have explained. No more is communicated by Anne's Lullaby, which has nothing to do with the action, except to allow her an exit without embarrassment and fuss. It is the destination of the Rake's progress that is so crucially at doubt here, and what Tom feels about it, and what Anne feels about it, and what we in the audience are to feel about it. The chorus mourns madly, we cannot tell for what, but we are almost inclined to mourn with them for the extinction of a hitherto incandescent work of art. For future productions, and there will be many, the authors ought to be prevailed upon to think through the conclusion again, and redo this last scene, if not the Epilogue. Piercing as it would be to lose any of the present music, the present ending causes even more dismay; some sacrifice is certainly necessary for a final relevance, and a greater beauty. I do not imagine, of course, that such a proposal would be likely to sit very well with Auden and Stravinsky. But after all, was not Mozart ready to rewrite the end of *Don Giovanni,* and to sacrifice "Il mio tesoro" too? and, I may say, on much slighter grounds? Consider, gentlemen. It would be the ultimate in neo-classical chic. And the resulting opera could renew an ideal that has never been too securely fortified, the neo-classical high ideal of *dramma per musica.*

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WILLIAM BECKER

The New American Play

> *A play that was all atmosphere, with no plot at all, would be my preference; in any case, the smallest modicum of plot that can be thrown in to hold the play together.* —John van Druten

IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY EVIDENT over the past three or four seasons that a wholly new set of formal dramatic values is in the process of being established on Broadway. If the origin of these values remains somewhat obscure, one cannot help suspecting that even a cursory investigation would prove it substantially more the province of a sociologist than a dramatic critic. For from the viewpoint of traditional dramatic criticism, the new values are largely negative: they imply a reduction of the medium, and not, for the most part, a reduction to fundamentals, but to an egregious preoccupation with what has seldom been anything but the most subsidiary or peripheral of dramatic values, namely, the "mood". The Mood Play is the first really identifiable new genre to emerge on Broadway since the demise of what used to be called "agit-prop" toward the end of the thirties; and if the new formula is unmistakably a sign of decadence, it is nonetheless worth observing, if only because it is a strictly indigenous product. It has as yet no relation whatever to anything in the current European theatre, and only the most accidental relations with the dramatic past anywhere.

I

There is a strong temptation to say, after having watched five of the more successful new productions—all, in more or less degree, examples of the new genre—that the mood chiefly evoked by the mood play is ennui. In one of his rare ("I know nowt about teeyater and dramedy") treatments of stage art, Ezra Pound noted with his customary plain perception that the first thing a play has to do is hold an audience:

> If it does not succeed in this it may be a work of genius, or it may be, or contain a number of excellent things, but it is *not* a good play. Some of the means whereby a play holds its audience vary from age to age; the greater part of them do not. The aesthetic author may complain that these means are mere trickery, but they are in reality the necessary limitations of the dramatic form. They are, for the most part, devices for arousing expectation, for maintaining suspense, or devices of surprise.

To this should be added that the drama is also a highly concentrated form of expression in which rigid standards of relevance must be adhered to, and in which one of a limited number of dramatic rhythms must be sustained. Noth-

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ing deadens an audience like lapses into irrelevance or failures in the pulse of whatever rhythm is required—often, of course, such lapses or failures are interdependent. Yet none of these five plays was able to hold its audience at every moment; and in most, there were sizable patches, even occasionally whole acts, of dramatically dead stuff. The frightening thing is not that they were all bad plays, but that they were all bad in such similar ways.

Perhaps the slickest of them, in respect of its writing, is Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful,* which recently had a mild success at Henry Miller's Theatre. Mr. Foote is one of the more prolific of this country's "serious" television writers, and this play originated as a successful script presented earlier in the year on the Television Playhouse (NBC), a one-hour program to which Mr. Foote is a regular contributor. That it even occurred to anyone that a television script, which had only the most minimal story line in the first place, could simply be padded out to the proper length and thereby fulfill the requirements of a stage play, is in its own way a sufficient comment. Yet it must be admitted that by the standards of the new genre, there is no reason why that should not be a possible, and even desirable, thing to do.[1]

Plot-wise, *The Trip to Bountiful* is an excellent example of the idea put forward by John van Druten in the sentence quoted as an epigraph to this essay: it is, in short, as nearly as possible a play without a plot. Instead of having a beginning, a middle, and an end, it can only be said to start, to continue, and to stop. In the first act, we are introduced to a household, located on the outskirts of a small city in Texas, and occupied by a man, his wife, and his elderly mother. We learn that the old woman is chafing under the strain of living cooped up in a city apartment with her bickering daughter-in-law, and has made several attempts to run away for a visit to Bountiful, the now-abandoned family farm on which she was raised. The bulk of the act is given over to a kind of portraiture for which Mr. Foote displays a by no means inconsiderable talent. The details of life in the household are keenly observed and studiously drawn, but also somewhat tediously drawn-out. By far the most effective thing in the play is the portrait of the daughter-in-law with her persistent yattering, her vanity, her endless retailing of telephone gossip, her frenzied flight from boredom into movie-magazines, coca-colas at the corner drugstore, and trips to the hair-dresser—all the while taking out her restless frustrations in a kind of purposeless and strident bitchery directed at the mother-in-law. She is a type of modern American woman, thoroughly deprived of responsibilities, whose utter rootlessness has caused her to substitute hysteria for feeling and left her jaded in a typically lower middle-class and unsophisticated way. The fact that the role is all on one key gives it the special quality

[1]Lawrence Langner, traditionally a spokesman for toney middle-brow fads on Broadway, recently announced that we can all now look to television to train new writers for the stage, and thereby revitalize the American theatre. It is a threat worth pondering.

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of a caricature, and sets it quite apart from the play as a whole. One feels that it belongs, not in the rather tritely sentimental context which the play provides, but in some sharp Dickensian comedy of humours. It may, however, be that a good part of the flavor in the role has been provided by Jo van Fleet, who gives a performance of extraordinary brilliance in the best tradition of American realism. It was the sort of performance which can honestly be called a study, in which every moment was so meticulously prepared and fixed that the actress was able to remain just sufficiently outside the role to project a sense of her own control. This was what largely accounted for the rich satirical overtones: the performance kept commenting on itself. Yet it cannot be denied that, through no fault of Miss van Fleet's, the performance was only theatrically effective, and not, in any full sense, dramatically operative. For there was too much of it to serve any dramatic purpose, and too little dramatic purpose to absorb and utilize its force. The single purposive action of the first act (and indeed of the play) is the mother's plan for escape, which involves deceiving the daughter-in-law by concealing the arrival of her pension check. A mild conflict is established when the daughter-in-law half suspects the plan, and begins idly searching for the check while warning the mother that neither she nor her husband will put up with any further tricks. But when at the end of the first act the mother takes quick advantage of one of the daughter-in-law's drugstore trips to make good her escape, the drama, to all intents and purposes, has ended. In fact, were it to be trimmed down by about half, the first act could stand alone as a superior one-act play.

But from that point on, the evening is largely dead wood. The second act shows the mother's trip, and the couple's attempt to head her off, in a series of short scenes taking place in the city bus station, on the bus, and finally in the country bus station twelve miles from Bountiful. Unfortunately everything in this entire act, except for the last few moments, is either repetition or irrelevance. The scene on the bus, for example, is composed of a long dialogue between the mother and a young girl who occupies the seat next to her. The girl's story has nothing whatever to do with the play; and the mother's conversation is half recapitulation and half gratuitous reminiscence about how she never really loved her husband—a point that has no function in the action and is never picked up or dramatically completed. Act three demonstrates a different kind of failure. The time has come for perception, recognition, revelation, that flowering of understanding which is the traditional completion of all dramatic rhythms. The mother has arrived at Bountiful, and her son and daughter-in-law come to fetch her. The stage is set for a kind of Tchekovian release into the perception of lost values. But one waits in vain for Bountiful to come to life as a genuine heritage, as a symbol of that rooted dignity for which, presumably, the mother is meant to stand. For the play to have had any semblance of shape, the third act needed to balance and complete the first: the world of the mother needed to be brought to bear in a dramatically revealing way on that of

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the daughter-in-law. But it never happens: the third act peters itself out in sentimental reminiscence, and tongue-tied hesitation, and cliché rhetoric. The failure is a far more fundamental one than the aimlessness of the second act, for it illustrates as directly as possible that failure of nerve which is deeper than the failure of craftsmanship and which is what persuades our wishful playwrights that you can have drama without the moral commitments that are implied by action—and projected dramatically by plot. Moral values are the agency through which craft and conception become mutually enabling disciplines—which is why a failure in craft is never merely a failure in craft. A play that does not work dramatically can never be just a bad piece of execution; it represents, more primarily, an undramatic idea to begin with.

Another play which exhibits failures almost identical in kind to those of *The Trip to Bountiful* is Calder Willingham's *End as a Man,* recently transferred to the Vanderbilt from its original off-Broadway stand at the Theatre de Lys. It is, if anything, even more shapeless, and very much less conclusive. Like *The Trip to Bountiful,* it exists primarily as a portrait—this time of a pathological bully in a Southern military academy. The central incident is a rather outlandish piece of villainy conceived by this bully ostensibly to discredit an honorable upper-classman whom he suspects of having been responsible for disciplinary measures taken against him by the Colonel. In the end, the bully, along with nearly everybody else involved in the scheme, is expelled. But no one could be quite sure from the play as presented what exactly Mr. Willingham was trying to do. On the one hand, he presented incontrovertible evidence of the ignominious pretensions and absurd toy-soldier discipline of military academy life. But on the other, his antagonist—in the form of the bully—was so outrageously and neurotically malignant as not to function as an antagonist at all. Intellectually the play cancelled itself at every turn, and the close of the final act was a shambles of contradiction and inconclusion: in this case a failure of nerve that was really hysterical in its proportions. It cannot, however, be denied that in passing Mr. Willingham did provide a half dozen interesting character sketches, and all of them were excellently performed—as might have been expected from the fact that most of the performers were Actors Studio members. In fact, the clearest evidence that Mr. Willingham has not yet learned the difference between drama and the novel is that some of his best scenes are those which have only the most tenuous dramatic purpose, and are there chiefly to establish character or mood. There was, for example, a short vignette in the second act (which was much more aimlessly irrelevant than *Bountiful's*) during which one of the freshman cadets complains to his pasty-faced, puritanical, hymn-singing room-mate that he really ought to have a bath now that the term is five weeks old. The comedy of this dialogue is rich stage stuff, but the effectiveness of comedy in serious drama, where it is used as ironic contrast, obviously depends deeply on the context, and this second act was so hopelessly lost as not really to provide a context at all. As an isolated scene, it did provide

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two of the actors with a fine sketch, and it should be said that William Smithers, who played the complaining cadet (the second lead in the play) gave the most finished performance from a young actor to be had on Broadway—much more finished, though less spectacular, than that of Ben Gazzara, who played the bully and was raised to star billing for it. Perhaps, in fact, this is the place to mention a distressing by-product of the new American play, namely, the degree to which it has to be supported (i.e., minimized) by star-performances. This, in turn, has resulted in the degradation of a fine theatrical ritual: the making of a star. It used to be that a performer worked his way up to stardom through a variety of roles and over a lengthy portion of his career. But today, the tendency is to create a star for the press-agent to plug as soon as a play draws indifferent notices from the critics but some lead performer is praised. There was perhaps some excuse for the starring of Julie Harris two years ago in *I Am a Camera,* for she had previously had at least one major Broadway success. There was much less excuse for starring Geraldine Page in *Midsummer,* her first Broadway appearance, albeit an excellent one. But there was no excuse at all—beyond the pressures of press-agentry—for starring Mr. Gazzara: the performance he gives is very good, but it is not extraordinary, and certainly not of star caliber. His role is one-dimensional, long, and spectacular, and therefore a set-up for any actor with the right general quality. It often occurs that a quite ordinary actor can be made to seem something special by a perfect meeting with some one role which happens to suit him in a way that may not have much to do with talent as such. Inasmuch as this was Mr. Gazzara's first Broadway appearance, it was impossible to judge the matter with any conviction, though it should be said that a serious carelessness (along with an arrogance that was behind the performance, not part of it) seemed to suggest that he might well be a case in point.

It would be idle to go into much detail about Louis Peterson's *Take a Giant Step* at the Lyceum. It was simply another piece of extended portraiture, bellied out with some mild incidents, and calculated to show the complex impact of adolescence on a young Negro who has grown up in a largely White district. Its success seemed to me much more the result of its general subject matter (on Broadway, plays in which minority groups are shown to be sensitive to their position are likely to evoke the automatized liberal sentiments of most of us) than of any depth of insight or genuine dramatic appeal. Nothing of dramatic importance took place: once the central point had been made a number of times in a variety of ways, the play stopped, and, as in *Bountiful,* the moral issues were side-stepped by a kind of passive reconciliation to the facts that precluded the necessity of action. Like the two plays already mentioned, this one was generally complimented for its "sincerity"—but sincerity, like broad-mindedness, can be a weak and monotonous virtue, and in any case does not by itself make good plays.

As for *The Frogs of Spring* by Nathaniel Benchley, which had a short run at

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the Broadhurst, it need only be said that it demonstrated fairly conclusively the case against the plot-less mood play as a vehicle for comic intentions. Adapted from a series of *New Yorker* stories which attempted to convey the genial and mildly absurd atmosphere of life in the backyards of New York's brownstone belt, the play remained an entirely innocuous, and occasionally amusing, but quite pointless series of scenes. It is surely a pertinent example of how confused and misguided the notion of theatre is becoming on Broadway that anyone of professional standing should have considered this *New Yorker* pastiche suitable material for the stage. For nothing in the whole production could be said to *require* a stage, except Boris Aronson's excellent set. In fact, what was probably the richest comic action of the evening—a drunken binge to Grant's Tomb—actually took place off-stage between scenes, and was related. That there is a fundamentally comic experience based on performance and communicable only from a stage, I tried to demonstrate in the last issue of this magazine. It now seems more urgent than ever that someone import to Broadway a few of those plays that *play*, and are not content merely to radiate atmosphere.

In many respects, Robert Anderson's *Tea and Sympathy*, which is one of the season's big hits at the Ethel Barrymore, does not belong definitively to the category of the mood play. It is neither aimless nor full of irrelevancies, there is a minimum of dramatically dead padding, and its craftsmanship by normal commercial standards is superb. It moves quickly and directly, and by doing so manages to generate sufficient interest in its incidents to hold the audience, except at a few moments when its emphatic spell was broken by what seemed to me misguided direction. Yet, in one or two important respects, it remains a mood play and shares the reticent low-pressure dramatism of the genre. The story concerns a boy at boarding school who is accused (wrongly we are meant to assume) of homosexuality, but whose absolute innocence in such matters leads him to feel that the charge may well be accurate. The course of the story is the purest day-dream; it all unfolds rather as if the playwright meant to see life only through the eyes of the boy himself; and it ends where such dreams always end—in bed with a fairy princess (the housemaster's wife) who simply appears at the moment of deepest despair, and unbuttons her blouse with one hand, as she reaches out with the other in a gesture of bestowal (the wand with the star on the end is for younger children). It is surely the most common adolescent masturbation-fantasy that exists. As a mood play, *Tea and Sympathy* qualifies on the grounds that its events are not the dramatic evidence of an *action*. As in all fairy-tales and mood plays, the characters are psychologically "fixed" by the time the story begins, and the movement of the play is simply a rearrangement of their external relationships, not in conformity with any expressed will, or through any new perspective impelled by dramatic revelation, but in conformity with the general mood and through a simple realliance of feeling. The relationship of the audience throughout is therefore entirely comfortable and passive: in this case it could bask in the touching isolation and

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loneliness of the boy on the one hand and the housemaster's wife on the other. The fulfillment of the mood (which is quite different from the completion of an action) is achieved with the fairy-princess's gesture, and even the act that is implied must remain just beyond the threshold of the actual play so that the daydream may remain intact in its primal innocence. It must be admitted, however, that *Tea and Sympathy* does everything that a mood play can do, and, as such, does not make for a wasted evening. It is full of carefully observed and realistic details that give a fine cast of performers and one of Broadway's more interesting directors something to work with. Elia Kazan's direction faithfully followed the spirit of Mr. Anderson's script, and in so doing, seemed to me to underscore that schizophrenic unbalance which is more or less bound to be part of the identity of mood plays. On the one hand, Mr. Kazan was determined to assure that the realistic details remained real and implied action, but on the other he was aware that the real course of the play was predicated on atmosphere and not on action at all. The result was an inconsistency in which the closing seconds of each act and the moments of highest "drama" were seen as pure fantasy with fairy-tale lighting and life reduced to slow motion. The effect was, it seemed to me, not to reinforce the mood, but to break it with ridicule. Yet I am not convinced that a less hyperbolic treatment would have served any better: the contradiction was there in the play.

II

One of the first things to understand about the mood play—with its autotelic character portraiture, its faulty or non-existent plots, its dreary repetitions and irrelevancies, its evasive flights from action and will into mood and sentiment—is that its characteristics are fast becoming the accepted aims of playwrights on Broadway. It is not merely that these playwrights cannot construct plots or conceive actions, but that they do not see the value of them, and have no interest in attempting them. A recent book by John van Druten, one of Broadway's more highly regarded manufacturers of plotless trivia, makes this all too clear. It is called *Playwright at Work*,[2] and a few quotations (in addition to the one used as an epigraph above) will serve to show Mr. van Druten's general position:

> If there is a new-born creature in the theater of the past thirty years, I would say that it is the play of mood, the play whose main quality—far more important than its story or its plot—is the maintenance and communication of a certain mood, through which the entire action is presented. There are not a great many of them, and Carson McCullers' [*The Member of the Wedding*] is one of the best. The *Glass Menagerie*

[2]Harper. $3.00. The disposition in favor of plotless plays began to be generally evident two years ago during the season in which Mr. Van Druten's *I Am a Camera*, an excellent case in point, rode to success on the brilliant performance of Julie Harris. See "Notes on the Broadway Season", HUDSON REVIEW, Spring 1952.

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> is another. To the people trained in an older theater, it looks as though the authors were totally unable to write in dramatic form at all, just as the paintings of many of the French impressionists of the eighties and nineties conveyed the same impression as regards drawing.
>
> It seems to me that life does not deal very much in plot and that when it does there is something slightly disgusting about it, as though a devil had got his hand into the machinery.
>
> [Arthur Miller in *Death of a Salesman*] preferred to concentrate on scenes that were of the true essence of what he was writing about, to isolate that essence and confine himself to it. I think that the better and newer plays are trying to do this. Much of the old padding has disappeared from them. The number of characters is diminishing. The plot line is simpler, clearer. The mood and basic emotional quality of the play are more closely adhered to. This is perhaps the beginning of a new kind of drama. Its rules are not yet formed. They depend on the depth and sincerity of the author's intention. I am inclined to think that an acquaintance with the older rules of the well-made play is still a good basis for learning how to break them. I would like to add that I am all for seeing them broken.

The polemic in favor of the mood play is the central theme of the book, though it eventually becomes clear that Mr. van Druten does not always recognize the consequences of his position, and the volume is full of queer contradictions. The only major playwright whom he recommends as a writer of mood plays is Tchekov, but his understanding of Tchekov is hopelessly Broadwayish—which is to say, almost nil. He likes the apparently plotless, atmospheric "quality" of Tchekov, but without seeming to understand that Tchekov's plays have intricate plots and depend on the most traditional, even classical, dramatic rhythms. The modernity of Tchekov consists only in his having transformed his plots and his rhythms entirely into the realm of the psychological.[3] It is inconceivable that Tchekov himself could ever have considered "mood" the proper object of a playwright's creative designs. But beyond Tchekov, the writers whom Mr. van Druten admires and recommends are all masters of the "well-made" plays: Pinero, Barrie, Maugham, Bridie, even on occasion, Ibsen.

In the end it is evident that Mr. van Druten does not understand in any real sense what a plot is, and that his argument against them is only part of a larger argument against craftsmanship of all kinds. A second theme that runs through the book has two sides: (1) "sincerity" is the primary aesthetic virtue, and (2) all art is a "subconscious" creation. This theme, in various guises, is a standard item in the ideological repertoire of the Broadway Intelligentsia, and Mr. van Druten invokes it in the customary way: as an incontrovertible

[3]Required reading for would-be mood playwrights who consider themselves successors of Tchekov should be Eric Bentley's essay, "Craftsmanship in *Uncle Vanya*", in *In Search of Theatre*. Knopf. 1953.

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premise for mindlessness. Believing in "inspiration", Mr. van Druten has no use for craft which implies deliberation, calculation, and thought:

> The psyche chooses what it wants to express. That is why I have never thought very much of notebooks. . . . If a theme is so elusive that it cannot be trusted to remain without a note being taken of it, it cannot have its roots very deep in one's inside. . . . I cannot help feeling that notebooks are a way of being rude to one's subconscious. It is from the subconscious that one creates.
>
> I detest planning a play. I dislike the sense of construction to the point of hating even to use the word. It suggests to me a form of dreary mechanics.
>
> [Certain of Ibsen's most revealing] lines never come from thought on the part of the dramatist, any more than they do from the person who makes them in real life. They are gifts from the subconscious, straight gifts from God.

Thus Mr. van Druten disapproves of craft, except in the foolish external sense—to which his volume is largely devoted—of how to get people on and off stage economically, how to convey information without seeming to do so, how to write useful stage directions, and so on. This is to say, of course, that Mr. van Druten really disapproves of writing *plays*, which is probably the reason he has so seldom written one: surely the most convincing arguments against Mr. van Druten's advice to playwrights are Mr. van Druten's twenty-one works for the stage.

III

I began by saying that the new genre represented a form of decadence. Decadence in an organism I understand to imply the elaboration of certain functional elements out of all proportion to their function in the whole organism, such that, in fact, they become ends in themselves and are no longer capable of fulfilling the ends for which they originally came into being. Eric Bentley has used the metaphor of the decadent breed of stags which "proceeds toward extinction in an ever-increasing ramification of antlers". It seems to me that our drama is similarly proceeding toward extinction as drama in an ever-increasing elaboration of mood-evocation and character-portraiture for its own sake.

Aristotle's insights into the general nature of drama, if broadly applied, will hold true for any non-comic dramatic form that came into use between his time and ours. It therefore may be of some interest to set an Aristotelian definition against those of Mr. van Druten, especially since Mr. van Druten, shortly after confessing his ignorance of Aristotle, invokes the Aristotelian "Unities" (which he defines as "a certain oneness") in behalf of the mood play. Aristotle is here considering the parts of Tragedy (for "Tragedy" one may today, for most practical purposes, read "Drama"):

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> But most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. . . . Again, if you string together a set of speeches expressive of character and well finished in point of diction and thought, you will not produce the essential tragic effect nearly so well as with a play which, however deficient in these respects, yet has a plot and artistically constructed incidents. Besides which, the most powerful elements of emotional interest in Tragedy—Peripeteia or Reversal of the Situation, and Recognition scenes—are parts of the plot. A further proof is, that novices in the art attain to finish of diction and precision of portraiture before they can construct the plot. It is the same with almost all the early poets.

The point is simply that the meaning of *action* and of *essential dramatic effect* —in short, the fundamental craft of drama—is the end which Mr. van Druten and his comrades would like to extinguish. It is apparently a shorter step than one would suppose from Aristotle's novices and primitive poets to the deliquescent evasion of the inspired Broadway sophisticate.

There are several interesting aspects to the development of Broadway's new genre. Perhaps the most astonishing is that the formula has not been, commercially speaking, a generally successful one. Nor artistically speaking has it commanded much critical enthusiasm. None of the plays discussed above could be described as "smash hits", and only two of them, in fact, seem likely to recover their investment. In such circumstances, one rather wonders how it has all come about.

Mr. van Druten mentioned Tchekov and a couple of modern successes like *The Member of the Wedding* and *The Glass Menagerie*, but it seems much more likely that the new manner has come more by way of default than of anything so positive as conscious imitation. Partly the mood play reflects that general failure of nerve which now characterizes Broadway as a whole. But more importantly, it seems to reflect the absolute isolation of our writers from the past masters of dramaturgy. There is quite literally no place in New York (or anywhere in America for that matter) where a playwright can learn his craft by watching and absorbing over a long period of time the principles inherent in the great examples of it. The result is that would-be American playwrights—and producers, and even actors—scarcely know what plays have been in the past, what modes and devices they have relied on, what myriad formal possibilities exist for the drama, and perhaps most crucially, what the demands and limitations of the form are. Mr. van Druten's inspired subconscious will never supply him an understanding of the *craft* of drama—and that is the one discipline which can compel a writer to think dramatically, just as an understanding

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of the craft of poetry can force a poet to perceive in a special way. This massive ignorance of enabling craft is, in itself, the most compelling argument for a permanent theatre given over entirely to the continuous performance of traditional masterworks: every country with a significant dramatic literature has one, and there is no reason to suppose that it is accidentally so.

The most striking paradox in the whole situation is that the mood play is based on a set of assumptions which directly contradict the principles of the method by which most good actors in New York work; namely, the Stanislavsky method. It is peculiar that a book like van Druten's is not pounced on and crucified by the one group of people who still know better, or ought to: the more articulate Stanislavskyite actors and directors who, if they understand anything at all, understand that action is of the very essence of drama. For this knowledge is the primary end of everything that Stanislavsky teaches; it is likewise the knowledge that Mr. van Druten is most conspicuously without. But perhaps the special aberrations of Stanislavskyism in New York are matter for an essay in themselves.

The basic fact remains that what is wanting from Mr. van Druten's conception and from the plays discussed above is not a knowledge of mere technical device but a fundamental conception of what the stage can and should do that the other arts cannot. What is missing is not merely "plot" in the normal modern sense of the "well-made" play (which itself is all too cavalierly scorned these days), but plot in the Aristotelian sense, i.e., events, incident, above all, *action,* which even professed anti-Aristotelians like Brecht have continued to insist is the soul of drama. It may be time for our playwrights to ask themselves why they need the stage if they cannot or do not want to show events, but only to depict characters or evoke a mood. It may be time to inquire if the devices of fiction are not just as adequate, if not more so, to the purposes they have set for themselves. It is surely time to rediscover what Ibsen could do that Dickens could not, however much we may be charmed by having our Dickens read aloud by a Laughton or acted out by an Emlyn Williams. When Ezra Pound writes that the greater part of the means whereby a play holds its audience do not vary from age to age, he is only pointing to the fact that the something which we call "drama" exists, and that while its rules may not be unalterable, its fundamental identity is. Even the most commercial of managements have a stake in this understanding of the dramatic mode: among other things, it is what makes some people buy tickets. The trouble is that one always finds the possibilities of dramatic form to be greater than custom would have us believe; and this discovery is inclined to lead to the fatal conclusion that the possibilities are unlimited, and therefore that the medium has no rules and no identity whatever. At this stage, the notion of craft becomes meaningless and decays. The result is the aimless wandering and irrelevant trappings of the decadent genre—of which the new American Mood Play is the most oppressively accurate example Broadway has yet furnished.

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Reviews

WILLIAM ARROWSMITH

The Wisdom of Poetry[1]

IF POETRY WERE MERELY A RHETORIC of high jinks and verbal blather, Mr. W. R. Rodgers could easily be cock o' the walk. High jinks in poetry help, and these also help: humor, passion, pity, wisdom, something to say and blessed tact. But other than its incontestable bravura, *Europa and the Bull* has none of these props: it is utterly without tact, short on wisdom and quite beside itself. "How the daft words proliferate in me like laughter!", exclaims Mr. Rodgers somewhere, and that "daft" is almost certainly right, except for suggesting a touch of Ariel in this March madness. Fun is not the word for this file of fornicating f's:

O fructifying friction, furthering both!

nor for the swan that saileth on saliva:

I saw lingering, late and lightless,
A single swan, swinging, sleek as a sequin.

nor even for Christ gone walking on the silly water:

O what a cock-eyed sea he walked on,
What poke-ends of foam, what elbowings
And lugubrious looks, what ebullient
And contumacious musics.

Daftness proliferated by alliteration; no laughter spawned these. Elsewhere "nick" breeds "nook", "fog" makes "fug", "fears" has "foreskins"; "fidget of midges that flag the flow / Far below." The words fresh from Mr. Rodger's own mint are worse: "switherings", "escalatoring", "grotesticled", "roundaboutly", "onlyness" etc. Metaphor is almost entirely aural: "knifelike knees", "hiccupping belly of bullying light", "willowy birds that, sail-like, wiled their way." By such ebulliences the title-poem proceeds to its epiphany of B and then SH:

But look! the Bull! indubitably bull,
Elbowing slowly through the obeisant herd,
Blazing and bellowing. . . .
Slow, slow, slow, with bubble-pause and slide,

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[1] EUROPA AND THE BULL, by *W. R. Rodgers.* Farrar, Straus and Young. $3.00. THE UNDERSEA MOUNTAIN, by *Harold Norse.* Alan Swallow. $2.00. TO LIGHTEN MY HOUSE, by *Alastair Reid.* Morgan and Morgan. $3.00. TEN BURNT OFFERINGS, by *Louis MacNiece.* Oxford. $2.50. THE MONUMENT ROSE, by *Jean Garrigue.* Noonday Press. $3.00. COLLECTED POEMS, by *Dylan Thomas.* New Directions. $3.75. COLLECTED POEMS, by *Edwin Muir.* Grove Press. $3.50.

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He paced before Europa there, and she
As if with shivering drew her shoulders now
Shyly about her, yet she shivered still.
Never did shadow so shimmer with midges
As she with switherings. Should she go?
Or no?

She went; he came, "tumbling timber in her waves." This is poetry utterly unanchored, without destination, propelled by an eggbeater. There is neither thought nor substance; meringue is all. What brilliance there is loses itself in the common cockalorum or gets tossed under the alliterative juggernaut. Typically the best poems are the least ambitious; I prefer *The Trinity, Neither Here Nor There, The Net* and *Armagh.* In these poems, as in the very close of *Europa,* temporary freedom from the compulsion for similar sound allows Rodgers to move with ordered development and even with loveliness:

This land was death; webs of breath
On every bush; loneliness curled in the leaf;
The leech was king.
The shot bird hung in air, the blown rose
Forgot to fall.

But these moments are disappointingly rare, especially in a poet whose *Awake* was one of the more exciting first books of poetry of the early forties. What was a virtue in that book, a virtue enhanced by promise, has here become the typical *hybris* of a virtue in excess, an attempt to extrapolate the full effect of poetry from only one of its ploys.

Mr. Rodgers' rhetoric of sound-for-the-sake-of-it is only one of the many rhetorical ploys which contemporary verse substitutes for poetry. Actually it is less harmful than most, since it has not as yet penetrated so close to our habits as to be almost invisible. But below the level of the genuine lyric of wisdom, passion or celebration lies a whole host of these rhetorical poetries, simple or complex, depending upon the number of springes they happen to employ. What they have in common is their confusion between the means of poetry and its full effect, and further behind that, the more radical confusion between life and poetry. Most of a whole generation of poets has been reared on the sophistry that poetry itself is a way of life with its own peculiar wisdom and that the effects of poetry are all fully explained by reference to its formal devices. The old notion that the pressure of having something to say guarantees the goodness of the language has been repudiated for its even sillier contrary, a repudiation reflected in the middle ground of contemporary verse with its virtuoso dither having neither magnitude nor substance. Criticism confirms, if it did not originate, the repudiation: by refusing to consider a poem's wisdom or truth, the relation of effect to wisdom and the whole question of the poem's

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adequacy to its burden, it gave implicit sanction to the view that a poem is only the sum of its formal ploys.

The villain (and now the increasing scapegoat) was Form, or rather the failure to make it clear that Form was really a mystique, and not a rationale, of tight, autonomous structure. The crimes committed under this banner are well known: it was Form that made Donne drum Spenser out of the language; Dickens, Fielding, picaresque and the novel of manners were dumped for the example of James and Flaubert. In poetry, the whole tradition of poetry as wisdom (e.g., the wisdom lyric running from Solon and Theognis up to the late Yeats and now Muir) was swamped by the emphasis upon poetry as a formal conceit or by the counter-emphasis upon poetry as a ritual celebration of life (Miss Sitwell's syndicate of Dionysiac artists). In either case what was insisted upon was effectively rhetorical. The intellectualized or fringe-emotions—irony, wit, discreet passion, disgust, coy pity—moved over to the center; elsewhere euphoria substituted for the celebration of the passionate particular. Direct statement became embarrassing or impossible, all the more so because criticism, having no idea how to handle it, gave it no honor. The critic who could run semantic rings around Ransom's

The little cousin is dead, by foul subtraction,
A green bough from Virginia's aged tree. . . .

was struck dumb by the directness of Eberhart's

I wanted to give him some gift,
Small child dying slowly,
With brave blue intelligent eyes,
His form withered piteously.

This dumbness in the presence of direct feeling infected the poet through the critic as a matter of course. Embarrassed by his stronger feelings or by the convictions of truth too simple for contemporary honor, he sublimated them into the minute agonies of structure, diminishing them to something else. The adroit manipulation of symbols became more important than what the symbols stood for, while truth was reduced to a function of charged language. Poetry itself was identified with a way of life; to be a poet was not a profession but a fate in which the human virtues could be vicariously acquired through apprenticeship in craft.

The poetry of Harold Norse is in part the justification for these charges. Norse, a young New Yorker and a "neo-metaphysical", is a controlled and clever poet who has clearly gone to school with contemporary criticism and learned his lesson well. His command of the honored skills is impressive; a sure feeling for the march forward of the poem and especially for the flat but powerful close; a gruff and jagged movement yoked together by dashes, parentheses and run-ons, but muscular throughout; tact in language everywhere

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visible in his respect for the meanings of words as well as their gestures; the ironic clash of formal and familiar; a rough but appropriately rough ear. Here is a typical example of his skills, the homecoming of the "evening scholars" from the closing lines of an acid little poem entitled *Graduate School:*

> *Then they break ranks, deploy like pigeons homeward*
> *Into the weather of the suburbs, toward*
> *Children and wives, and long, clean hours of study*
> *In which exists no laudanum—nothing bloody.*

Break ranks; deploy; suburbs; pigeons; the powerful because understated scorn of that *clean* and *nothing bloody*—these are the marks of a well-earned diploma from the New Criticism. They are also the marks of an exercise in poetic academics, the stock diction of a stock convention. An essay could be written on the pecular anemia of the sense of life in our new metaphysicals of "blood"—the easy victory with a situation stultified in advance, the revealing passage from "laudanum" to "blood". But by virtue of Norse's genuine rhetorical skills, *The Undersea Mountain* would, at almost any other time but now, have made an impressive first book. What makes it unimpressive is the commonness of its skills and the conventionalization of its subject-matter. It is a poetry in a period-style on a period-subject: a tight poetry of desperation. I am not quarrelling with either tightness or desperation; there are good reasons for both. But it should be obvious by now that contemporary verse has made its desperation a convention, a pastoral of anguish with a characteristic decor, emotion and resolution. The test of the poet's skill is his ability to recreate or to purge the key emotions (loneliness, fear, guilt and disgust) by his play over the established surfaces of the form. Mr. Norse has full command of the decor ("seagulls like giant rats", "cold tides of doubt", etc.), obvious familiarity with the requisite emotions, and a sustained atmosphere of threatened violence. But except in poems like *Warnings and Promises* and the jazzed terror of *I Remember Papa* where experiences have clearly harrowed close to home, the bulk of this book remains precisely at the level of convention, unauthenticated, without resonance. Without wishing to impugn the honesty of Mr. Norse's desperation, I am afraid that the prevailing impression of this book is the rhetoric which comes from a stock response grafted on to the rhetorical and conventional skills of formal structure. What goes for Graduate School and the New Criticism goes for him too, and in his own words:

> *All truth, and situation, is planed smooth*
> *With tools of criticism, sharp but slow*
> *In execution. . . .*

Mr. Alistair Reid's first book, *To Lighten My House,* is a pleasant beginning with the advantages of candor, freshness, modesty and no readily apparent derivations. He writes about what he knows best; he is almost as innocent of

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a manner as a master, and he composes with simple competence a poetry of simple promise. That promise, however, is the product of the last poems alone and especially of the title-poem. His earlier poems (excepting the fine *The Day the Weather Broke*) are mostly odd-job exercises or rather hazy evocations of the "here and now", that startled moment in which the self and poetry are perpetually renewable because the self, reborn, sees as though for the first time, freshly. Typically, a descriptive "moment" is evoked in long, lazy lines packed out with alliterative cotton, and then startled alive or caught in amber, then smashed from the outside ("a butterfly drunkenly begins the world"). This mystique of the momentary *now,* renewing world and self and scattering birthdays with an open hand, is the matrix of Reid's poetry. His failure to make his mystique a real birthday—trauma, candles and all—diminishes the earlier poems; statically conceived, the moment merely happens, unearned by the poetry. With the later poems, the poetic obstetrics improve: awakening is forced out, as experience converges with language to earn rebirth. *To Lighten My House* is the poem which shows most clearly Mr. Reid's success in getting himself born as well as his failure to give that birth either significance or context. Out of that moment in which Mr. Reid's two lives (his boyhood on the Isle of Arran and his new life in America) are reconciled, a dedication emerges, signifying deliverance and rebirth:

> *into my bruised dark house, light breaks like a birthday*
> *as, shouldering the weather of this place, I wake in*
> *the nowhere of the moment, single-willed*
> *to love the world.*

There are two things to be said about this as they affect Reid's poetry in general; first, that promise to love the world has no relevant ground or test or history in the poem proper, and hence resolves nothing; second, the world is a large order for one man's love, and the will to love is a poor substitute for loving. Like poetry, love is not normally to be had by a mere act of compulsion. The question in my mind is whether Mr. Reid is more interested in the dramatics and compulsions of the poet's dedications than in earning the poetic right to make those commitments. His short poetic autobiography, for instance, contains the strange melodramatics of a 26-year-old poet protesting his advancing "autumn" and his fear of losing "the power of song." The point at which a man feels old is his own business, but in the ancient mysteries the initiate first had to descend to Hades and be dunked in the muck of his own past to earn his symbolic death. Only then could he drink his Lethe and climb back up to clean clothes, the light of the world, his birthday and the goddess. Mr. Reid dies a little too easily to earn, really earn, his day of birth. This is a premature book, however promising.

Jean Garrigue is an exciting poet. What was once a clear case of promise in her *Ego and the Centaur* has now blossomed superbly; unless I am badly mis-

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taken, the appearance now of *The Monument Rose* puts her easily among the best younger poets of America. To the festive air *sans* feast of her earlier book, this volume brings a banquet out of Sappho and Khayyam; to her old knack for sweetness, the creation of felt love, and for those earlier O's of incoherent ebullience, the exact exhilaration of language. In consequence, this small, sumptuous 50-page book is a fine, magnificently sustained performance; anthologists will disregard at their peril nearly half the poems in the book, especially *Some Serious Nonsense for the Cats and Wolves,* the exquisite Sapphic invocation of a Muse of song and love in *Song for a Marriage, The Maimed Grasshopper Speaks Up,* and perhaps best of all, *The Little Pony.*

The rosebush which flowers on the grave: Miss Garrigue's poetry is a celebration in all the possible terms of those two symbols; the rose-life in brief bloom above the grave, commemorating the dead, or grave and rose together composing a symbol "for those unborn". To this hybrid marriage of life and death, this honey in the skull, the poetry sings epithalamium:

But clouds run and hammers ring
Jays knock-knock and weeds abound
In a jubilo of sound
Till nests be stitched from broomed
Grass left by the flood's great trace
And every eyelet skull be found
Combed and honey-greaved with right
Vigorous and juicy song
So even deaths resound.

To give death its resonance means *a fortiori* giving resonance to life, and Miss Garrigue's firmest skill is with the sound, the colors and the feeling-wash of things, the full sensual resonance of an object to its practised observer. It is an uncommon skill, this kind of particularity, and it means everything for the kind of poetry she writes. Ritual is nothing if it is not exact; its precision is the condition of its success. To "vigorous and juicy song" Miss Garrigue adds "rightness", and in this she sharply separates herself from the common barbarism of celebrative poetry, the identification of festivity with the euphoria of nameless things, the celebration of the self through nature seen merely as heraldry. Her fruits, animals, colors and sound are not heraldic, but the things themselves; the emotion is not in them, but out of them, in their accumulation and her play over them: "in the pink stalls the melon, / While the mango, magniloquent stem, / Steeped him in baskets, Othello's green". That mango may be magnificent, but it is still mango: *nihil ignotum pro magnifico.*

Add to this the mastery of dynamics and resolution that comes only with a poet's perfected style, the poem moving with the habitual movement of the mind. Characteristic movement in Miss Garrigue's poetry is in the periods of a strophe, the long lines used to belly out and float what the form cannot

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restrain, emotion run-on intentionally in the ascending curve of the statement, closing pendant into the next line, then returned to the short lines of a formal close, blunt, tamed, resolved. Her skill with the dynamics of a traditional syllable-count period are no less remarkable:

> *All those with hearts must give them up this day*
> *Faint hearts desist and mask your coward's pallor*
> *For this is heart's ease day, when dear-my-loves*
> *Blood-bright or velvet-sewn, adorn the door*
> *Or smash their pretty triumphs on the floor.*

To me at least, this is remarkable handling of blank verse, skill everywhere visible—in the shifting locus of the internal caesurae, in the extra-syllabic second line consuming its rest, the piled stresses in lines three and four, and the fine full resolution of the last line, earned not only by being end-rhymed, but through the even regularity of the iambs, only here without caesura or substitution. Miss Garrigue is a rare prosodist; it is primarily her prosodic skill that allows her to create the impression that her poems are always threatening to get out of emotional control, and are barely brought back under the reins in the end, when they have never, from beginning to end, done anything that was not formally provided for. Her chariness with punctuation, for instance, suggests how conscious these skills are; with her, comma and period (i.e. the indispensable syntactical minimum) suffice against confusion, and mastery of verse-silences and movement takes care of the rest. Further, her basic period-form and its component cola thereby emerge clearly as units in their own right and permit the syntactical impression of a kind of enjambing of the emotions, which normal punctuation tends to hamper.

These are technical skills and poetry is, of course, more than the sum of its skills. But these skills, because they embody her whole truth as a poet, lie at a much deeper level than the mere auxiliary skills; they are not only the way in which her mind moves, but the articulation of the life that moves in on her when she writes. That her poems should constantly have the look of overleaping their formal structure is right not only as a matter of rhetoric, but is right for the life which she celebrates. As a poet of celebration, her truth is not the truth of her statements but the adequacy of her celebration and her own adequacy as celebrant. Her danger and the falsehood proper to this kind of poetry are the usurpation by the celebrant of the thing celebrated (e.g., "Syncope of powders, O my O's"), or the collapse of her formal means to contain her celebration. And at the moment I see very little cause for alarm, every reason in the world for praise.

Poets are often dogged by their promise and Louis MacNiece has been dogged by his as much as any. At least it has always been urged against him that his failure to measure up to his own lights was disappointing; if only, the complaint goes, he were not so irritatingly facile; if only he could be a little less

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discursive and a little more intense, then there was nothing that his obvious skills could not achieve. MacNiece's failure to reform in book after book must now look a little perverse, so perverse that one is justified in asking whether it is so much that MacNiece has failed of his promise as that his promise was wrongly defined from the start, or defined without relation to his abilities. This much now seems to me certainly true: MacNiece was from the first a discursive poet, peculiarly at home with a rambling, conversational form; he was the ideal diarist or the verse journalist of the clever speaking voice. Injustice came in assuming that success for such a poet lay in the acquisition of lyric intensity rather than the intensity proper to conversation and the discursive voice; in loss of clever facility rather than the intrenchment of his verse-ease in the service of his wisdom. We had no honor for discursive poetry, and success in poetry was felt to be synonymous with success in the intense lyric. Nothing in MacNiece suggests the intense lyricist, and we blind ourselves to the real virtues of one of our ablest minor poets by constantly obtruding an irrelevant disappointment. *Ten Burnt Offerings* is the fulfillment of MacNiece's promise, and his best book to date; it is the work of a poet who has persistently refused to be intense at the cost of being portentous and who has been undeterred by the prospect of being a minor poet if he could at least be both an honest and a civilized poet.

Ten Burnt Offerings contains ten poems of moderate length, each poem subdivided into four sections, on an apparent variety of subjects: Byron in Greece, the death of a pet cat, St. Didymus, the autobiography of birthdays, Isaac Watt, etc. The poems are "burnt offerings" because poetry and living alike are forms of burning, and these poems burn with a lifetime of man and poet. They are records of having consumed oneself, bonfires which flare an affirmation at the same time that they burn goodbye to bad rubbish. Beneath this symbolic joinery, there is genuine unity consisting of thematic momentum from one poem to another; a theme is taken up, inverted, transformed and proposed for acceptance or rejection. The key movement can be contained in two words: homecoming and renewal. *Ten Burnt Offerings* is an unmistakable birthday-book in the form of an odyssey: to come home again means to rediscover persons and places and in them to rediscover oneself. In this way MacNiece as Odysseus passes through his troubles and his temptations to arrive on Ithaca (which is Athens or anywhere) and find his dead Argus (or his Dick Whittington's cat) and his true Penelope asleep in the unsuspected shrubbery of the home she makes. The enabling condition of the journey is an insight and a faith, not MacNiece's quondam and uprooted hope that things might after all be for the best, but the discovery in himself that this hope was rooted in the love of persons and places, and that these not only allow but demand faith as much as despair. To the godhead or principle which enshrines the double activity, fear and hope, both Marlowe's address and Ralegh's reply, both candle and drum, the whole book is an offering; it is, after all, the same wind

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which "plays on the wheat" and "harries the ends of the world". What the Greeks did with their Eumenides is what Mr. MacNiece means:

Could we lead our Furies to their shrine?
Forget them sprung of blood, remember them divine?
Nurses of fear and hope, come taste our honey, taste our wine!

The "unknown god" to whom the book is offered is not unknown because unknowable, but because he has yet to be revealed; but the declaration of the worshipper's faith is in itself a partial revelation of the god. By his worshippers ye shall know Him. At the moment Mr. MacNiece's piety is more to be recommended than his theology, though his faith can be shared by any man who puts his trust in the Muses and the politics of this world and faith in humankind.

It is well done: the long conversational dialectic moving slowly from provisional statement to the lucid generality of the lyric sections, the progression corresponding to the changes of degrees of perception in the poet's dark. The whole book is in this sense a recapitulation of MacNiece's career as poet and man; first, the poet so tangled with his provisos and his ease of statement that he seems self-defeated at every move; then the genuine despair of the standstill at *aetat.* 40; finally the *lumen* of certainty and understanding moving in, and the initiate's rediscovery of his true gift and his proper passion. MacNiece may sound like a man talking aloud, but it is eloquent and not merely clever talk; he may be clever, but he is now also wise; he may be facile, but give us more facility and sweetness like this (*The Death of a Cat*):

Not really classic. The Greek Anthology
Laments its pets (like you and me, darling),
Even its grasshoppers; dead dogs bark
On the roads of Hades where poets hung
Their tiny lanterns to ease the dark.

Those poets were late though. Not really classical.
So this is an epitaph, not for calamitous
Loss but for loss; this was a person
In a small way who had touched our lives
With a whisk of delight, like a snatch of a tune
From which one whole day's mood derives.
For you and me, darling, this is an epitaph.

The *Collected Poems* of Dylan Thomas[2] should be the occasion for a genuine reassessment; it is certainly high time. If Thomas is, as some claim, the finest living poet in the English language, we deserve to have made clear the prejudices which permit such a judgment; if he is, alternatively, only a compulsive babbler (as some still think), we need to be shown why the babble is

[2]This review was in print before the recent and regrettable death of Dylan Thomas.

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so successful as poetry. In the meantime, I should like to push several observations which seem to me to touch Thomas' poetry in the area of its typical risks and advantages, and its promise in particular.

To begin with, Thomas is a poet of severe limitations, and those limitations are crucial as a bar to his further development. Thomas' debt to primitivism is well known; no need here to speak of his debt to Frazer or Welsh primitive custom or germane symbolisms. For all his apparent debt to Donne and Herbert and the English metaphysicals, Thomas is only in the most distorted sense a metaphysical poet himself. He is in fact our most consistently and extravagantly primitive poet, and I mean no dispraise by this just yet. He came to poetry with a natural Eleusinian sense of life, and he has done his best to deepen that sense as the matrix of his poetry. His own poetry is all explicitly in praise of a life-process which bears less relation to Bergson than to Heraclitus or to Empedocles. It is overtly pre-logical; in Thomas' process, logical opposites like Being and Not-Being fold naturally into one another; death and life are directly interchangeable terms by virtue of the process which throws them up as merely different specifications of itself. To insist that Thomas *thinks* as, say, MacNiece thinks, is to ignore the fact that the language in which Thomas' "thought" is carried on belongs to those fine days before Plato's *Parmenides* when Not-Being still Was. I am not, of course, saying that Thomas "babbles"; he doesn't. But he has anachronized the world back into his process with little concern for the cost. Christ, for instance, is in Thomas no Christian Christ, but amoral and pre-Christian: all Adonis. Moreover, his process is not only prelogical (which doesn't matter in a poet of Thomas' skills) but also premoral (which, I think, does matter).

Put it this way. Thomas' poetry is in praise of Process ("the force that through the green fuse drives the flower"); his typical problem has been the reconciliation of the individual with the process: how can a man have a history or destiny apart from the process, especially when his relation to it is one of making second-order statements about it, like the artist? Up to now, the artist-participant whose vision gives form to the process itself has been Thomas' answer. In the new poem, *Over Sir John's Hill,* for instance, there is an unusually magnificent statement of a common Thomas idea: the celebration of the Process in equal praise of the destroying "hawk on fire" and the murdered "small birds of the bay"; standing aside, neither wholly within the process nor wholly apart from it, are the linked figures of the "holy heron" and Dylan as the fabling Aesop of the Process, singing both a paean and a dirge, i.e., a "paeanodirge". Elsewhere Thomas is the Noah of the small animals with whom he sets sails against the flood; there, lonely at first, he finds the sea blossom with "a multitude of arks" (cp. "alone in a multitude of loves") which signify creature-communion and common love in the great flux. All creatures by living and dying celebrate the process; their poem is in their

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living the process out, incarnating it, while the poet (who is with them, but not of them, like Noah or Aesop) lives in his poetry his informing second-order praise.

It is, for obvious reasons, not altogether easy to come to terms with this Eleusinian apocalypse and its passionate prophet. It has, after all, generated poetry of extraordinary vitality in the hands of a poet who lives it as a matter of faith. And for all its rigorous pre-logicality, it is not therefore philosophically invalid. But there are, I think, two major objections, one concerned with the method of its carrying out, and the other concerned with its human cost. To celebrate life means to celebrate its particularities as much as the universal behind them; and given the apparent strength-in-particularity of Thomas' poetry, it is perhaps imprudent to suggest that Thomas is more in love with Process than the small creatures who have to live it. But for all the flurry of creatures, mice, foxes, badgers, etc., who clamber on to Dylan's ark, it seems clear to me that if Thomas is a Franciscan, he is the Francis of symbols, without tenderness. These animals are heraldic; they are not foxes *qua* foxes, but Process-foxes, and what Thomas loves in them is not their individual lives but the smell of the processed fox. This point, if granted, leads directly to the second. The Process is an abstraction of Life, and to give your heart to an abstraction means the eventual truncation of the humane emotions. If it does not mean that, then it must mean the falsification of the animals and creatures in whom Process is felt to be immanent. For instance: in *Over Sir John's Hill,* the poet speaks explicitly of "praise to the hawk on fire!" and equally of grief for the hawk's victims ("we grieve . . . for the sake of the slain birds sailing"). To celebrate Process means celebrating both destroyer and destroyed as being essentially one; but Thomas fools himself if he thinks that grief, real grief, for the victim is compatible with the oppressor's glory, even in the matter of birds. If the grief is genuine, it is because it is not grief for real birds at all, but for the emblem-birds of Process. And elsewhere it is the same; what is true of birds is true of men. Truly to celebrate Process means not to be able to afford the human luxury of grief or pity or pride; they are irrelevant to Process or its waste-products. I have the constant impression in Thomas that his devotion to Process has resulted in a genuine truncation of the emotions or has forced him to artificialize his grief and his creatures so they can carry the intolerable weight of the life-process. What makes him a magnificent poet, that thudding vitalism in which winds whack and hills bounce, cuts him off from the completion of his poetic and human skills. Thomas is a primitive poet, and the cost of that primitive celebration is the loss of the civilized virtues and the problems of civilized men. The cost is, I think, already taking its toll; at least I find in these late poems a renewed belligerency about Life which shows itself in increasing rage and self-disgust, the rage of a man who feels that Morality or a Christian Christ is on the point, despite all his efforts,

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of getting a foothold in the Process via the back door. A lover's quarrel with Process should be worth watching; not until then will these mysteries be either moralized or civilized.

Earlier in this review I made the suggestion that the universal critical insistence upon formal skills in poetry had tended to ignore the question of what adequated those skills. The problem of a poem's truth or authenticity, the rightness and adequacy of its response to its experience, was more or less rejected from among the practical concerns of criticism. There was, besides, another important consequence in the relative disappearance, or at least its disappearance as a candidate for critical honor, of a whole traditional genre of poetry, that which could be called the discursive wisdom-lyric in distinction to such celebrative poetries as those of Jean Garrigue or Dylan Thomas. It is easy on a matter like this to be either portentous or sentimental or both, but it is equally easy to hedge an obvious truth simply because it is obvious or embarrassing. What I mean is simply this: contemporary criticism, by overtly ignoring the sense in which great poetry is a direct attempt to formulate and thus to adjust to the human condition, has come close either to barbarizing the subject-matter of poetry or to making it decadent. The better or more independent poets were unaffected; but a climate of opinion is no less dangerous because the better minds are uncontaminated by it. Even now the reaction against the sterility of institutionalized criticism threatens, in revenge, to create another climate of opinion, a kind of critical vitalism more irresponsible than the most excessive of the academic criticisms. More irresponsible, that is, because even less concerned with adequacy, and explicitly committed to the artist's way, whatever it might turn out to be, as self-justifying. But Wordsworth, I would suppose, is just as dangerous a banner as Donne, and it is hard to see that Lawrence in poetry is any banner at all. Why critics and poets alike, however, should have suspected the human condition as a subject for poetry is not really hard to see; at least it seems clear to me that the reaction against Victorian and Georgian rhetoric in poetry threw out the baby with the bath under the suspicion that it was the subject which corrupted the language, rather than the other way around. In any case, what was lost was the sense of poetry as the full, adjusting play of the general human intelligence over its natural metaphysics, sometimes regarded as its platitudes; and once that sense of poetry was lost, the critic too lost his ability to respond with his full general intelligence to the formal conversation of a civilized mind.

The poetry of Edwin Muir comes pat to this predicament. It is surely the finest book of poetry for a long time now, and surely the wisest. Radiant, humane, composed out of a direct strength below the words—you have to go to the last best of Yeats or, earlier, to Hardy to find anything quite like it. But most particularly it is the poetry of a wise man, whose wisdom is not that which comes from the practice of poetry but from the conduct of life. Nothing seems clearer here than this: the direct procession from living into

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poetry; the man unusurped by the professional; the agony and faith of living and not merely the agony of having to write about living. A whole lifetime's skills of living converge here with loving craft in the particular act of wisdom which is the poem. If this is an illusion, it is at least the illusion of the finest poetry. And Muir, there can be no doubt, is one of the five or six finest poets writing in the English language today, and certainly one of the most civilized poets our age has produced.

But these are superlatives, not criticism. Muir is not what is called an intellectual or a conceptual poet, not a poet of ideas but a poet of experience and its meaning. The texture of his poetry, moreover, is not one of the fashionable textures; it is almost wholly serious, reflective, without irony or metaphysical wit, and incidentally without gaiety. In thought and structure alike, he is a traditionalist, without thereby being a literary traditionalist like Eliot, nor, like Bridges, a traditionalist in the sense that his poetry is untouched by contemporary experience. It is in the mode of his mind that he is a traditionalist, in his ability to make a modern experience and its poetic response a part of the corpus of concrete utterance in the language: he traditionalizes everything he touches. Experience is grounded in contemporary experience without explicit reference to it; the modern is mythicized. Thus *this* war, by the time it has run through Muir's poetic processes, is realized as any war, which is to say that Muir manages to extrapolate the human condition from any given experience, and to maintain it without sentimentality by the consistent dignity of his diction and expression. His verse is nothing if not dignified; it moves slowly, not with what could be called a stately movement, but with a steady, measured reflective advance with the caesurae strongly marked and an almost rigid avoidance of run-ons or other devices for speeding or chopping the tempo. Against monotony, he uses sparingly but with enormous effect a variation of caesurae, or the blunt impact of a gnome. The diction is sure, exact, and unembarrassed; few modern poets can use the old poetic counters—truth, beautiful, honest, etc.—so commonly suspected of emptiness of content by overuse, with such tact of placing and fullness of meaning as Muir. Few poetries, in fact, are so consistently self-effacing as this, and few poets so ready to sacrifice their particular felicities because they tend to remove the attention from the meaning of the poetry.

It is this austerity of effect, this modesty of poetic means, that is the chief impression of Muir's poetry, and in the face of it, I offer these few technical comments without much conviction of their importance as compared with what Muir is saying. This is the reaction such poetry intends, and it is the condition of only the greatest poetry. Fifteen years ago, Muir himself spoke of a quality in poetry which he claimed was an ingredient of the greatest poetry, and it is a quality which is particularly strong in his own verse: "This quality is the power to make a natural, immediate and yet overwhelming statement which produces such conviction that we forget the voice which

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utters it. Statement of this kind always strikes us as being newly forged, without a trace of poetic reminiscence; as being a concrete addition to the utterance of mankind." Eliot, again, is clearly in pursuit of such a quality in his verse-plays and in the *Quartets* where he explicitly warns us that "the poetry does not matter"; and elsewhere, he has insisted that what he wants heard in his dramatic verse is, not the poetry itself, but "the meaning of the poetry". Thus, in Muir's poetry, the slow seriousness of the thought, the diminishing of the outward violence and flare of rhetoric, obscures the technical virtuosity; or, to put it another way, the means are so adequated and adjusted to what is being said that the rhetoric is no longer visible as a means at all; it appears merely as the very necessity of what is being said.

I never felt so much
Since I have felt at all
The tingling smell and touch
Of dogrose and sweet briar,
Nettles against the wall,
All sours and sweet that grow
Together or apart
In hedge or marsh or ditch.
I gather to my heart
Beast, insect, flower, earth, water, fire,
In absolute desire,
As fifty years ago.

Acceptance, gratitude:
The first look and the last
When all between has passed
Restore ingenuous good
That seeks no personal end,
Nor strives to mar or mend.
Before I touched the food
Sweetness ensnared my tongue;
Before I saw the wood
I loved each nook and bend,
The track going right and wrong;
Before I took the road
Direction ravished my soul.
Now that I can discern
It whole or almost whole,
Acceptance and gratitude
Like travellers return
And stand where first they stood.

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There is more genuine mastery of language and experience in that one poem than there is in twenty pages by Dylan Thomas; yet there is no line or single word which has half the charismatic prominence of Thomas' language. It is a cumulative poetry, dense with Muir's personal and yet available symbolism. I am not hedging when I say that the poem will not achieve its fullness of meaning unless taken in conjunction with the corpus of his poetry; but a wisdom poetry *is* cumulative, and there is a whole corpus of living and poetry behind that "track going right and wrong" and the inward explosion of "Direction ravished my soul". It is the genuine substance of this apparently muted speech that allows Muir to end, without trumpets or rhetorical recapitulation, in the simple and unaffected "And stand where first they stood." Another poet, standing on less sure ground and more in need of securing by a brilliant close the internal autonomy of the poem, would have wrecked the poem on a piece of rhetoric. Muir himself, not always perfect, is capable of bringing an otherwise superb poem (*The Island*) to rest on a line—"the resurrection of the rose"—whose patness and artificiality is in striking contrast to the natural intensity of the rest of the poem. It would be strange if this did not happen, surprising that it does not happen more often; it is not easy to be consistently natural.

Muir's wisdom, like any genuine wisdom, is not easy to talk about without reducing it to a mere gnome deprived of its existential foothold in the poem. But the chief stages in Muir's poetry are those of his life also, a life which falls naturally into the titles of his successive books: *First Poems* (childhood); *Journeys and Places, The Narrow Place, The Voyage, The Labyrinth* and after, or to use a figure from one of his poems, the descending and other side of the watershed, or homecoming and understanding. The odyssey of experience contained in these titles should be perfectly clear; no need to document here what is meant in modern experience by The Narrow Place or The Labyrinth; these terms are as general as they are personal. What is personal in Muir's odyssey is the sense of Time as the antagonist; he begins his life as something of a Platonist in poetry with a hankering to find the still moment, Time out of Time, the Eden of rest. Throughout the period of restlessness, the time of journeys and places, and the trapped to-and-fro of the man locked in the labyrinth of the world and the labyrinth of his own heart (it is relevant that Muir is chiefly known as the English translator of Kafka) the idea of a philosophical and emotional rest is constant, though honesty as well as time prohibit stopping. To come out of the labyrinth is to make your peace with the world and time:

Acceptance, gratitude:
The first look and the last
When all between has passed
Restore ingenuous good. . . .

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Almost all of Muir's late poetry is luminous with this act of adjustment, and to the old Platonic Eden of his desire, he can now propose:

Yet still from Eden springs the root
As clean as on the starting day.
Time takes the foliage and the fruit
And burns the archetypal leaf
To shapes of terror and of grief
Scattered along the winter way.
But famished field and blackened tree
Bear flowers in Eden never known.
Blossoms of grief and charity
Bloom in these darkened fields alone.
What had Eden ever to say
Of hope and faith and pity and love
Until was buried all its day
And memory found its treasure trove?
Strange blessings never in Paradise
Fall from these beclouded skies.

If this is not wisdom, this concrete utterance of natural human metaphysics, earned by living one's life and discovering in it the general condition and an adjustment to it, it is hard to know what it is. For poetry Edwin Muir proposes its perfection in living; for criticism, the problem of a poem's adequacy to carry its burden and the general refreshment of technique in what gives it validity.

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HUGH KENNER

Something Nasty in the Meat-House

BROTHER TO DRAGONS, by *Robert Penn Warren.* Random House. $3.50.

THIS "TALE IN VERSE AND VOICES" brings the hysterical shades of Thomas Jefferson and certain of his kinfolk together at an unspecified place and time to thresh sense out of a senseless piece of cruelty and to modify what seems in the light of that cruelty to have been a wantonly hopeful vision of human innocence. The piece of cruelty actually occurred, on December 15, 1811; fourteen pages of Notes document it, and a Foreword carefully delimits the modifications of detail ventured by the author. Lilburn Lewis, nephew to Jefferson, said to his brother "Hand me that meat-axe, Ishey", and proceeded to chop up a slave named George who had just broken a china pitcher possessing sentimental value. He began with the hands that had fumbled the pitcher; then dealt with the feet that had run away—

Lil whacked 'em off and flung 'em in the fire.

Though we are spared further inventory, an eye-witness particularizes the deed with delirious gusto: the meat-axe

Gets in, gets through, goes chunk, *and chunks on wood;*

as for the victim,

You got to yell when they start chopping you,

though the assassin's less staunch brother Isham was too horrified to hear anything:

I just can't hear it when that axe comes down.
Looks like I'd hear it if it's really real.
And when that nigger spreads his mouth all wide—

Mr. Warren is not unaware of incipient titters; since "the action here is not explained / By anything in the action" emotional control is a serious difficulty. Yet the "Voices" are anchored in history; the thing really happened, and a coherent response ought to be possible. Furthermore, since Jefferson scholars can find no reference by him to the event in Kentucky, Mr. Warren can so far as Jefferson is concerned avail himself of *carte blanche.* Nevertheless, his objective isn't to reconstruct history but, he says, to write a poem. "I . . . therefore have no compunction about tampering with facts. But poetry is more than fantasy, and is committed to the obligation of trying to say something about the human condition."

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We may take this as a tip to inspect the verse. One notes occasional borrowings; from *The Hollow Men,*

> *Wind, force without body, word without*
> *Meaning, accident without essence,*

or from *The Cocktail Party,*

> *And as for the others, let us wish them well*
> *In the ineluctable sterility of their various sanatoria*
> *Where all the light is like a light from snow,*
> *And hope that there's always somebody to change the bedpans,*

appropriated on the whole with tact. One notes also a considerable skill at adapting accent to speaker, Isham's jogging spondees, the wife Laetitia's light dazed garrulity. But the prevailing texture proves strained and declamatory, a willed violence attempting to wrench into significance what we are simply stuck with because it happened: a little as though the author had had before him a draft of *Murder in the Cathedral* rewritten by Robinson Jeffers:

> *The ice is a foot thick, and beneath, the water slides black like a dream,*
> *And in the interior of that unpulsing blackness and thrilled zero,*
> *The big channel-cat sleeps with eye lidless, and the brute face*
> *Is the face of the last torturer, and the white belly*
> *Brushes the delicious and icy blackness of mud.*
> *But there is no sensation. How can there be*
> *Sensation when there is perfect adjustment? The blood*
> *Of the creature is but the temperature of the sustaining flow:*
> *The catfish is in the Mississippi and*
> *The Mississippi is in the catfish and*
> *Under the ice both are one with God.*
> *Would that we were!*

This is a rather favorable specimen. "Unpulsing blackness and thrilled zero" is good Eliotese, though other epithets do not surprise by their justness. But the "Would that we were!" is bathetically undeft, and "the face of the last torturer" seems an excessive catachresis to inflict on a catfish. Catachresis and bathos are the besetting vices of Mr. Warren's dramatic verse, inseparable from the shambling hortatory pulsation of its backwoods eloquence. We read of

> *that last hour indefensible*
> *When the stars sweat and the dear toad weeps in the hole,*

of how

> *. . . darkness danced on tiptoe far above*
> *The last torn cloud and tore the streaming and apocalyptic*
> *Horror of its enormous hair,*

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and of how "R.P.W.", a character in the poem, was beset by July-flies while voiding his bladder,

> *. . . and in that simultaneous outrage*
> *The sunlight screamed, while urine spattered the parched soil.*

The characteristic voice which tends to subsume each of the others resembles that of a Kentucky preacher hypostatizing Sin. A town called Smithland contains more than its surface banalities: this is what it contains:

> *The pillow bitten in the midnight pain*
> *Of love disprized or lust exacerbated,*
> *Ambition burked and the ego oozing like*
> *The secret sore and the suppuration smells . . .*
> *For people live here after all. . . .*

A voice labelled "Jefferson" describes the delegates to Philadelphia in 1776:

> *delegates by accident,*
> *in essence men:*
> *Marmosets in mantles, beasts in boots, parrots in pantaloons.*
> *That is to say, men. Like other men.*
> *No worse, no better. Only ourselves, in the end.*
> *Only ourselves, and what we then happened to be—*
> *Offal of history, tangents of our fathers' pitiful lust*
> *At midnight heat or dawn-bed ease.*

Mr. Warren doesn't, to do him justice, offer Jefferson as a vacuous Clifford Chatterley whose thin idealisms can be pulverised by a blast of Southern passion. He does worse: he transforms him into a stoveside rhetorician, a Gavin Stevens who has "read the books" and knows

> *that all night long*
> *History drips in the dark, and if you should fumble*
> *Your way into that farther room where no*
> *Light is, the floor would be slick to your foot.*

It is in large part a failure of idiom that betrays Mr. Warren into these clichés of the sensibility: verse isn't his happiest medium. His novels are of another dispensation; *World Enough and Time,* by playing Jeremiah Beaumont's richly-varnished aspiring rhetoric against a modern commentator's dryness, achieved effects of genuine massiveness and power. Its use of three planes—Jeremiah's diary, sympathetic narrative, and academic commentary—was a genuine and necessary invention; the bathos that always threatens the Warren hero could be exorcised by a distancing phrase or two. *All the King's Men,* in every way inferior, made use of only two planes insufficiently dissimilar: events, and Jack Burden. *Brother to Dragons,* because by chopping the curve of the rhetoric

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into five-foot lengths and throwing discrete words into cruel isolation its verse defeats every effort to vary the tone, is confined to a single plane; hence Mr. Warren, whose natural medium isn't the word or the line but the sonorous mass, must repeatedly entrust his urgencies to single words unsustained by a reliable idiom. Hence, in particular, the unconvincingness of Jefferson, who had a linguistic gift of his own inseparable from an idiom this verse can't assimilate.

But it isn't only the idiom that betrays Jefferson; a myth without which Mr. Warren cannot operate racks and travesties him. Jefferson, in an anomalous manner, is the real villain of the piece; his predecessors in the Warren mythus are Willie Stark and Cassius Fort. Mr. Warren is a writer with one theme which never quite gets objectified; it is becoming commonplace to note that his successive books are versions of one another. The theme has to do with some inherent corruption which propels whatever events nourish our versions of the incorruptible. Jeremiah Beaumont's treachery and violence (in *World Enough and Time*) were not "for naught" because, for one thing, they make a heroic tale. We need heroic tales because of a necessity we share with "the lowest and most vile creature" to idealize our existence in order to exist.[1] On the other hand, there is no real heroism: brave words and valiant actions are tainted at their source by the pride amid which they are evisaged. Yet they dramatize values which inspire the next generation: values are illusions, but the final wisdom is to see and prize their necessity. Of the hero of his last novel Warren writes:

> It was a drama he had prepared, an ambiguous drama which seemed both to affirm and to deny life, to affirm and to deny humanity. But it may have been the drama Jeremiah Beaumont had to prepare in order to live at all, or in order, living, to be human. And it may be that a man cannot live unless he prepares a drama, at least cannot live as a human being against the ruck of the world.

Conrad, who lived in the shadow of Tyndall and Huxley, entertained ideas of this order; the guilt and failure of the Old South, for all its stress on heroism, provides the analogous vacuum within which Mr. Warren entertains them. It is a philosophy that recommends itself to men who have grown convinced that the human effort lacks substance: a philosophy of noble gesture. It would need to be set forth in more careful terminology to be susceptible of philosophic rejoinder. But it is relevant to hold the philosophy, or the temper of mind it rationalizes, responsible for the severe limitation of themes and effects in Mr. Warren's writings. When not lyrically propelled, they are nearly as monotonous as those of A. E. Housman, another blood-satured sceptic.

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[1]The terminology of this paraphrase is chiefly taken from Mr. Warren's Introduction to the Modern Library *Nostromo*, his most accessible statement of his themes.

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An index to this limitation, then, is the way Jefferson becomes, in *Brother to Dragons*, just another Warren character. Mr. Warren has a single plot, in which one sort of idealist kills another sort. The killer and the killed have prepared each one his drama. The former is vindicating himself in a private world, the latter in a public one. Because public men's equivocations touch many other lives, the killer can disguise the deed to himself as an act of justice, and Mr. Warren can enquire darkly what is Justice, indeed? In his recent works the killer has been growing both more passionate and more abased, while the victim (as Mr. Warren becomes increasingly confident of the spuriousness of any public idealism) gets more and more exalted; it was perhaps inevitable that he should finally turn into Jefferson.

Willie Stark in *All the King's Men* was a petty dictator who once meant to do good, and Adam Stanton a relatively uncomplicated liberal. In *World Enough and Time* the slain public man has turned into Cassius Fort, who sought (and Warren leaves us free to credit his sincerity) to "reconcile all in justice", while his nemesis Beaumont is a hothouse Macbeth who, surrounded by sympathy and poetic symbolism, spends hundreds of pages protesting his innocence, hundreds of hours acting out a lie, and ends as a syphilitic wantoning in a swamp. In *Brother to Dragons* the killer is finally a mere sadist who exults in foulness, and the victim is so explicitly insignificant that he is quite obviously a mere surrogate for Jefferson himself. Lilburn once did something or other to his wife in the dark ("It was an awful thing", she recalls, "It was so awful that folks could do so awful . . . And I wanted to say 'Stop!' but I couldn't say a thing") which isn't named but which, like the unspecified sexualities in *The Turn of the Screw*, is meant to indicate the ultimate corruption. Jefferson on the other hand, entombed on his green mountain beneath his "triple boast", represents the ultimate in human worth. Or rather, in human reputation; for his worth is finally as Lilburn's. The "dream" (also unspecified) with which he endowed and deluded America was conceived in burning vanity, its sire the Minotaur

> *hulked*
> *In the blind dark, hock-deep in ordure, its beard*
> *And shag foul-scabbed*

at the centre of Jefferson's labyrinth of Self. Lilburn too was overruled by his Minotaur; and Jefferson, his heart broken by Lilburn's deed, is made to announce that Pain is "the only real thing" and reach the familiar and flattering modern conclusion that we are all implicated in whatever anyone does.

There are, we concede, realities of passion not contained in Jefferson's prose, excluded by its very idiom; but to have him gibber on Lilburn's first approach,

> *Look! that's the one,*
> *The bloody brother and his hands, but look!*
> *But look, his hands don't drip, his hands have nothing*
> *On them, look his hands—*

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seems hardly the way to acknowledge them. This is not the only humiliation the author of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom must undergo. He must vent irritation at being surprised by silent negro eyes

At meat, at stool, at concupiscence,

and submit to the accusation of another relative, Meriwether Lewis, the man who made the expedition with Clark, that the Jeffersonian idealism was a betraying lie. Meriwether is posterity; he stands for the millions who in the special view of this poem have been cheated by the Founding Fathers' optimism.

"If," writes Mr. Warren in his Foreword, "the moral shock to Jefferson caused by the discovery of what his own blood was capable of should turn out to be somewhat short of what is here represented, subsequent events in the history of America, of which Jefferson is the spiritual father, might still do the job." Ultimately Jefferson is being arraigned in the name of an America where "Ford and Plymouth vie to make you happy, / And money jingles in the local jeans". He is a well-meaning villain who articulated an "ultimate vanity", but who after brooding for over a century on the event in the meat-house cries,

. . . now all has been made clear to me, and I know now
It is the monsters slain that are innocent. . . .
And as for the heroes, every one
. . . but plays the sad child's play
And old charade where man puts down the bad and then feels good.
It is the sadistic farce by which the world is cleansed.

So he has come to regard his own heroism; and while it would be grossly unjust to say that he is represented as finally brainwashed, reciting a confession and a new creed, yet the idiom in which his new hope is couched ("If there is to be reason, we must / Create the possibility / Of reason, and we can create it only / From the circumstances of our most evil despair") simply won't effect the necessary liaison between Mr. Warren's predilected image of man, "balanced . . . between the black inward abyss of himself and the black outward abyss of nature", and any conceivable mode of consciousness possible to the historic Jefferson. And even though this is "a poem, not a history", contact with the historical Jefferson must be somehow effected to give any point to the use of historical characters. But all Mr. Warren's talent and sincerity can't defeat those rhythms, that idiom, and that philosophy.

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NORTHROP FRYE

Forming Fours

FOR SOME TIME NOW the Bollingen Foundation has been producing a series of books on symbolism, the unifying theme of which would have puzzled anyone who did not realize that they were mostly Jungian documents. Now, as Number XX in the series, a complete English translation of Jung, in eighteen volumes, is announced, and the first two, Volumes 7 and 12, have just appeared.[1] One is a revision of *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (the phrase "analytical psychology" means Jung, just as "psychoanalysis" means Freud), and the other, *Psychology and Alchemy,* is a more systematic and erudite version, with a tremendous bibliography, of the desultory work previously known in English as *The Integration of the Personality.*

Jung's conception of human personality, or what he calls the psyche, is built on a Freudian foundation of a conscious ego, trying to be rational and moral and adjusted to the demands of society and nature, and a subconscious "shadow" (not far from Freud's "id"), formed of one's suppressed or ignored desires. If the ego insists on regarding itself as wholly good and the shadow as wholly evil, the way is open for neurosis and schizophrenia: for a healthy life the ego must come to terms with the shadow and recognize its essential continuity with it. The centre of the psyche then shifts back from the ego to a balancing point between ego and shadow, a point of pragmatic wisdom. The outer and inner worlds then appear as a world of power and a world of love respectively, which the pragmatic wisdom in the centre of the human trinity tries to hold together. The outer psyche now becomes a "persona", or social mask, and the inner one a "soul", or focus of love. If the outward formation of the psyche is that of a man, the soul is a female "anima"; if it is a woman, the soul becomes a masculine and rationalizing "animus", often taking the form of a group. The problem now is to prevent the centre of pragmatic wisdom from becoming absorbed into either persona or anima. If this happens, they will become autonomous "complexes" (a word of Jung's invention). A dominating persona, or superiority complex, is the natural danger of an extroverted temperament: it may turn one into a stuffed shirt with a bad temper, for the word "hypocrite" is really a synonym of persona, and the bad temper is the revenge of the neglected anima. Introverts (the words introvert and extrovert are also Jung's) are more in danger of an "inferiority complex", the anima-dominated life of a social craven.

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[1]TWO ESSAYS ON ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY, and PSYCHOLOGY AND ALCHEMY, by *C. G. Jung.* Bollingen Series. $3.75. $5.00.

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But if persona and anima are kept in balance and each limited to its proper function, the natural result is the release of two deeper powers from the unconscious, which move up to reinforce them. These correspond approximately to the parental figures of Freud's later essays on the ego and id, and are called by Jung the Great Mother and the magician or old wise man. Here there is still a possibility of becoming absorbed in one function or the other, but on this third level the absorption would make one a leader or spell-binder ("mana-personality"), either of the sage type or of the hero type, depending on whether the absorption is inward into the mother or outward into the father (in a woman these directions would be reversed). If the psyche successfully navigates this third crisis, the centre of the personality has finally been transferred from the ego to a "self" which is the real centre. The four "archetypes", or semi-autonomous personalities which the psyche has partly created and partly evoked, now settle into the four functions of psychic life: thought, feeling, intuition and sensation. (At least I think they do, but this point comes somewhere in between the two books, and Jung's argument here may be less symmetrical than my account of it.) The self is now the centre of a circle with four cardinal points, and this fourfold circle appears everywhere in religion, art and private dreams as the diagram called the "mandala". A simple Western example is a picture of Christ as the fourfold Word of God, surrounded by the four "beasts" of Revelation, later identified with the four Gospel narrators. The whole process of shifting the centre to the true self Jung calls "individuation", or, sometimes, "transformation".

Of the differences between Jung's thought and Freud's, there are two that concern us just now. All modern scientific analysis of the psyche must of course be rooted in therapeutic techniques for helping the mentally ill to function at least normally, whatever normally means. Jung believes however that the ordinary medical analogies of diagnosis, treatment and cure are not adequate for the psychologist. The physical body nearly always matures in about twenty years, but in most people the psyche remains largely undeveloped throughout life, though possessing within it a force of growth towards the "individuation" which is its peculiar maturity. This growing force within the psyche is what Jung, in contrast to Freud, means by libido, and, being a biological force, it behaves teleologically, just as an acorn behaves as though it intended to become an oak tree. When a psychologist tries to help a neurotic, he is helping to release this power of growth, and he ought to realize that any "cure" is only one stage in the process he has started going.

Secondly, the drama of individuation does not take place entirely within the individual. The archetypes come in to the individual from a "collective unconscious", inherited from our ancestors and extending over present-day society. Hence the dreams and fantasies of the individual should not be interpreted solely in relation to his personal life: they are also individual manifesta-

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tions of a mythopoeic activity found in everybody; and private analysis should be supplemented by an objective study of the analogies between the patient's mythopoeia and that of the art, folklore, mythology and romance of human beings generally. In Jung, as in Proust, the study of the psychology of the mind leads to the discovery that men are "titans in time", and that their creative powers rise from an essentially timeless world.

This at once raises the question: if the self is established at the centre of the personality, and a centre implies a circle, what and where is the circumference of that circle, if it is not to be confined to the individual? Of course by hypothesis nobody can establish the boundary of an "unconscious". But Jung is finally, in contrast to his former attitude, beginning to assert explicitly that "there could just as well be layers *above* consciousness". In this context his maturing psychic process latent in the "normal" mind has close analogies with Indian yoga and the Chinese Tao, and his conception of a self which is the opposite of the ego seems to lead logically toward the Hindu Atman or the Buddhist Citta, in which the self becomes fully enlightened by realizing its identity with a total self, an indivisible unity of God, man and the physical world. This conception is the basis of Aldous Huxley's "perennial philosophy", the mystic's axiom "Thou art That".

In Christianity it would correspond to the final integration of man into the body of Christ, Christ being not simply God and the creator of nature but a God who is also Man. Jung gives a good deal of attention to the Oriental analogues to his thought, especially Taoism, but his attitude to Christianity is more devious. The doctrine of an "immortal soul" he rejects, as the soul in his system is the anima, a part of the undeveloped ego which is eventually dissolved into a function of an obviously mortal individual. However, they told me at Sunday School that the Christian view of immortality was based on the conception of a spiritual body, not of a bodiless soul, and Jung may not have got this doctrine quite right.

Catholic theology supplies a set of existential or objective counterparts to the archetypes of the unconscious (the Father-God, the Mother Church, the Virgin and the Son manifest in the world), and this enables the believing Catholic to project his archetypes, and so attain a pragmatic balance between his inner and outer worlds. For all those who feel compelled to regard these personal entities as psychological fictions, the archetypes have to be dealt with in the psyche itself. This is very difficult to do, and the upheavals of mass neurosis in the twentieth century are the result. The Catholic solution is, Jung feels, whether actually true or not, psychologically the easiest and for most people still the best, but Jung's own "individuation" is closer to a visionary tradition which runs through Meister Eckhart and after the Reformation is mainly Protestant, appearing in Paracelsus, Boehme, Blake and some of the Anabaptists and Quakers. But Lutheran and Calvinist Protestantism tend to rest on a

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simple contrast between a good God and a sinful man, and thus project, not the archetypes, but the original tension between ego and shadow which leads to neurosis. The idea of God as the "wholly other", in which regeneration becomes a kind of drama within the Trinity which man is somehow in but not of, is evidently regarded by Jung as his chief theological opponent.

This exposition ignores a few non-functional inconsistencies which seem to have an emotional origin. There is, to use his own term, a complex in Jung's mind that makes him balk like a mule in front of the final acceptance of the totality of the self, the doctrine that everybody is involved in the fate of everybody else, which the uncompromising charity of the great religions invariably insists on. His "collective unconscious" is actually the total mythopoeic power of humanity, and has nothing to do with ancestor cults of "racial differentiation", or groping around in the windy bowels of Teutonic exclusivism. But the explicit affirmation of this obvious fact seems to stick in his throat like the amen in Macbeth's, although his intelligence has to proceed exactly as though it had been made anyway. We simply have to step over such passages as a footnote in the *Two Essays* in which he says he's not anti-Semitic: he just thinks "it is a quite unpardonable mistake to accept the conclusions of a Jewish psychology as generally valid. Nobody would dream of taking Chinese or Indian psychology as binding upon ourselves." Well, he does, and if by "Jewish psychology" he means Freud, he has certainly accepted plenty of its validity for his own system.

When Jung began to supplement the purely analytical interpretation of dreams with a hermeneutic study of the analogies to dreams in myth and romance, the result was a most important study, soon to be republished in this series as Volume 5, *Symbols of Transformation*. It was previously known in English as *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, although its original title, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, gives a much better idea of its contents. Just as the "individuation process" became the informing principle of his psychology, so the mythopoeic counterpart to it, the hero's quest, became the informing principle that Jung, with some help from Frobenius, perceived in myth, folklore and literature. The heroic quest has the general shape of a descent into darkness and peril followed by a renewal of life. The hero is confronted by a dragon or power of darkness who guards a treasure or threatens a virgin. He is often accompanied by a shadowy companion who seems to be a double of himself, and is given counsel by a magician, an old woman, or a faithful animal, the last being a regular symbol of unconscious powers. The hero kills the dragon, or sometimes, as in the story of Jonah and the Harrowing of Hell, disappears into its body and returns, often finding, as Beowulf does, that the most dangerous aspect of his enemy is a sinister female principle, whom Jung calls the "terrible mother" and links with the fear of incest and other erotic regressions.

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In any case the accomplishing of his quest gains him his bride, the dragon's hoard, or both. The double-edged power of the archetypes for good or evil is reflected in the stock black-and-white patterns of romantic characters: there is a wise old man and an evil magician, a solicitous mother and a wicked stepmother, a heroine and a siren or temptress, a hero and a traitorous companion. One can see in the quest-myth too not simply a psychic allegory but a kind of geotropism as well, as the heroic quest catches the cyclic rhythm of nature, the sun setting and reappearing from the body of a dark monstrous underworld the next day, and, every year, transforming the sterility of winter and raising new life from underground. Thus the salvation of the individual soul, the religious myth of a Messiah or redeeming God, and the renewal of energy in nature all seem to be contained in a single mythopoeic framework. At the same time there is a dialectic in the quest, not a passage from death to revival but a transformation to a new and timeless life, which means that in the final analysis the dragon or enemy of the quest is the cycle of time and nature itself, symbolized by the ouroboros, or serpent with his tail in his mouth.

The themes and patterns of this book are strikingly similar to those of Frazer's *Golden Bough*. I think there is an explanation for the similarity, but I have first to explain my explanation. Literary criticism, as a science, is obviously a social science, but the social sciences are so recent in their development that they have not been clearly separated even yet. Thus *The Golden Bough* was intended to be a book on anthropology, but it was also a book on literary criticism, and seems to have had far more influence in literature than in its alleged field. Perhaps the reason is that, in extracting a single type of ritual from a great variety of cultures, Frazer has done what the anthropologist, with his primary interest in cultural pattern, cannot do—if I may speak under correction of a science I know very little about—but he has also done precisely what the literary critic, with *his* interest in ritual pattern, wants to see done. Similarly, Jung's book on libido symbols extracts a single dream type from a great variety of individuals, all except one unanalyzed and many of them not even identified. Again, he has done something which may be largely meaningless to most therapeutic psychologists, but places the book squarely within the orbit of literary criticism. It has thus become, along with *The Golden Bough*, a cornerstone of archetypal criticism, and it appears to have made more stir among the literary critics who happen to be, like the girls in *Finnegans Wake*, "jung and easily freudened", than among psychologists—though again I speak under correction. At any rate Jung seems to be leading Freud's great discoveries in the direction of a first-hand study of literature, whereas Freudian criticism itself, even Freud's own brilliant essay on Leonardo, tends to take us away from the works of art into the biography of the artist, and so, like many other forms of research, to neglect real criticism in favor of the peripheral darkness of "more light".

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Archetypal criticism is that mode of criticism which treats the poem, not as an imitation of nature, but as an imitation of other poems. It studies conventions and genres, and the kind of recurrent imagery which connects one poem with another. The archetype is thus primarily the *communicable* symbol, and archetypal criticism deals with literature as a social fact and as a technique of communication. To an Aristotelian critic, poetry exists, as Sidney says, between the example and the precept. The events of a poem are exemplary and general, hence there is a strong element of recurrence in them. The ideas are precepts, or statements of what might be or ought to be, hence there is a strong element of desire in them. These elements of recurrence and desire come into the foreground with archetypal criticism. From this point of view, the narrative aspect of literature is a recurrent act of symbolic communication: in other words a ritual. The narrative content of a poem is studied by the archetypal critic as ritual or imitation of action, and not simply as a *mimesis praxeos* or imitation of *an* action. Similarly, the significant content is the conflict of desire and reality which has for its basis the work of the dream. Hence it is inevitable that the archetypal critic would find much of interest in the work done by contemporary anthropology in ritual, and by contemporary psychology in dreams.

Archetypes are most easily studied in highly conventionalized literature, which means, for the most part, naive, primitive or popular literature. It attempts to extend the kind of comparative study now made of folk tales and ballads into the rest of literature, and seizes on the primitive and popular formulas in great art: the formulas of Shakespeare's last period, or the book of Revelation with its fairy tale about a damsel in distress, a hero killing dragons, a wicked witch, and a wonderful city glittering with jewels. We may distinguish two kinds of archetypes: structural or narrative archetypes with a ritual content, and modal or emblematic archetypes with a dream content. The former are most easily studied in drama: not, as a rule, in the drama of the educated audience and the settled theatre, but in naive or spectacular drama: the folk play, the puppet show, the pantomime, the farce, the pageant, and their descendants in masque, comic opera and commercial movie. Modal archetypes are best studied first in naive romance, which includes the folk tales and fairy tales that are so closely related to dreams of wonderful wishes coming true, and to nightmares of ogres and witches.

Frazer's *Golden Bough* is, as literary criticism, an essay on the ritual content of naive drama: that is, it reconstructs an archetypal ritual from which the structural and generic principles of drama may be logically derived. It does not matter two pins to the critic whether this ritual ever had any *historical* existence or not. Frazer's hypothetical ritual would inevitably have many and striking analogies to actual rituals, and such analogies are part of his argument. But the relation of ritual to drama is a relation of content to form, not of

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source to derivation. Similarly, the dream content of naive romance is the communicable dream content. It has no relation to psychoanalyzing dead poets, but it would have striking analogies to the fantasies dredged up during psychoanalysis. Jung's book on libido symbols, is, as criticism, an essay on the dream content of naive romance, and Jungian criticism is always most illuminating when it deals with romance, like Zimmer's *The King and the Corpse,* an earlier volume in the Bollingen series. And the central dream in Jung is essentially identical with the central ritual in Frazer, though the hero is individual libido in one and social fertility in the other, and his enemies parental regressions in one and the waste land in the other.

Soon after the publication of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido,* an associate in Jung's field, Herbert Silberer, made a study (known in English as *Problems of Mysticism and its Symbolism*) of an alchemical tract in the Rosicrucian tradition, which he analyzed first psychologically and then in terms of its own cosmological, or, as he called it, anagogic, meaning, and showed that the two interpretations ran parallel. Jung also soon discovered in alchemy another mythical parallel to his individuation process, and plunged into a study of alchemical symbolism, both Oriental and European, which has borne fruit in this lavishly illustrated, exhaustively documented study of *Psychology and Alchemy.* The structure and symbolism of alchemy is here compared, not simply with Jung's own psychological system, but with the archetypes of the heroic quest as well. It should be said at once that most of its readers will want to hold it up to a mirror, like Jabberwocky. That is, the way that Jung has approached myth, working outwards from his own practice as a doctor, has had the result of turning every mythopoeic structure he has studied into a vast allegory of his own techniques of psychotherapy. It is doubtful that anyone not a hundred-per-cent Jungian can take the whole of myth, including alchemy, in quite that form, but the parallel mythopoeic structures that emerge from his study are not less rewarding in themselves. Some of these parallels are suggested by the admirably chosen illustrations, even when they are not explicitly dealt with in the text.

Alchemy, at least in its fully developed Christian form, was based on the idea of a correspondence between Scripture and Nature, the *verbum scriptum* and the *verbum factum.* Its religious basis is Biblical commentary (*not* the "Church", as Jung keeps saying). Repeating classical experiments is a normal part of scientific training, and the idea of alchemy was to repeat the original divine experiment of creation: "Lapidis generatio fit ad exemplum generationis mundi," as one alchemist quoted by Jung remarks. One isolated, first of all, a *prima materia,* corresponding to the chaos of Genesis; then one extracted from this a spirit of life, called Mercurius and associated with the *anima mundi,* which contained within itself the potency of all life and was consequently hermaphroditic. This hermaphrodite then became the substance that had to be

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redeemed or transformed; it changed from the chemical analogy of the Holy Spirit to the analogy of the old Adam or fallen nature (not Adam as first man, which would be the homunculus). As such, this hermaphrodite corresponds to the antagonist of the heroic quest: the dragon or monster, the leviathan, the old man, the serpent or ouroboros, and it is represented by these symbols.

From this the principle of complementary opposition was next evolved, associated with various symbolic pairings, male and female, sun and moon, odd and even numbers, red and white. It was often called the marriage of the red king and the white queen. The union or *coniunctio* of these (often thought of as some form of incest, because they sprang from a common parent) shifted the theatre of operations from a hermaphroditic to a female principle, just as in the Bible it is shifted from fallen nature to the Church or Bride of Christ. At this stage a third principle, a son or divine child, regularly made his appearance. The final stages are full of associations with the number four, especially the four elements, as the final work of redemption brings with it the power of living in water and fire as well as earth and air—a symbolism familiar to us from a late and not over-profound Masonic treatment of it in *The Magic Flute*.

The philosopher's stone itself was the chemical or demiurgical analogy (or perhaps rather *aspect*) of Christ, the elixir being to nature what his blood is to man. The fourfold symbolism is based on the fact that both man and nature have an inside and an outside, a subject and a object. The centre of nature (the gold and jewels hidden in the earth) is eventually to be united to its circumference in the sun, moon and stars of the heavens; the centre of the spiritual world, the soul of man, is united to its circumference in God. Hence there is a close association between the purifying of the human soul and the transmuting of earth to gold, not literal gold but the fiery quintessential gold of which the heavenly bodies are made. The human body and the *vas* or alembic vessel of the laboratory thus experience parallel phenomena. The power of Christ, is, in Scripture, the teaching that gives man immortality, the fountain of eternal youth; in Nature, it is the healing power or panacea that will restore nature to its original innocence, or the golden age.

The relation of all this to the actual attempt to transmute base metals into gold was, and still is, the great mystery about alchemy. The unifying conception soon died out, presumably because the alchemists got nowhere with their experiment (although, as we really don't know what they were trying to do, many of them may, for all we know, have done it), and alchemists broke into straight chemical experimenters on the one hand, and occult philosophers on the other, each group regarding the other as a rabble of self-deluded charlatans. The associations of alchemy were apocalyptic and visionary, but not necessarily heretical, as Jung tends to think: the notion of a redeeming principle of nature

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as an aspect of Christ is a quite possible inference from the conception of substance which underlies the doctrine of transubstantiation. The parallels between alchemy and the mass, worked out by some of the more zealous allegorists, are perfectly logical granted their premises, and there is no occasion for Jung's speaking of their "bad taste". The rejection of transubstantiation by Protestants, however, along with the Protestant minimizing of the value of works (which would of course include the alchemical *opus*), had a lot to do with hastening the decay of alchemy. The essential point to remember is that when alchemy loses its chemical connections, it becomes purely a species of typology or allegorical commentary on the Bible.

In Jung's book the symbolic structures of alchemy and the heroic quest are united on the Euclidean principle that things equal to the same thing are equal to one another. The "same thing" is Jung's own individuation process, whose general resemblance to the *great work* of alchemy, on its psychological side, is not difficult to demonstrate. But, centuries before Jung was born, the "same thing" to which alchemy and romance were equal was Biblical typology. For the Bible was not only the definitive alchemical myth for alchemists, but the definitive grammar of allegory for allegorical poets. Its central structure is that of quest-romance: it tells the story of a progress from creation to recreation through the heroism of Christ in killing the dragon of death and hell and rescuing his bride the Church. Jung would perhaps have made this point clearer if his own literary experience, being German, had not given so central a place to Goethe.

For Goethe's Faust is already a chemist, ready to believe that St. John's *in principio* means "nothing but" (one of Jung's most effective phrases) "Im Anfang war die That". And Goethe himself does not follow the central structure of Biblical typology: hence his treatment of symbolism, while it is brilliant, varied and ingenious, is not scholarly, as Dante, Spenser and Blake are scholarly. When we read the quest-myth in the first book of *The Faerie Queene*, with its elaborate red and white imagery, it seems loaded down with alchemical symbolism, but we don't need to assume that Spenser knew about alchemy, because we can derive all the symbolism from the Biblical tradition anyway. True, when we meet the hermaphrodite and ouroboros in the temple of Venus in the fourth book, we realize that Spenser *did* know about alchemy, but by that time we have a better idea of the context of such symbols. As for Blake, there is hardly a page of *Psychology and Alchemy* without close analogies in the Prophecies. But that does not prove that Blake knew alchemy; it proves that he knew the Bible and how to use it in poetry. With this additional connecting link, we can see that Jung's book is not a mere specious paralleling of a defunct science and one of several Viennese schools of psychology, but a grammar of literary symbolism which for all serious students of literature is as important as it is endlessly fascinating.

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JOHN HOLLOWAY

Can You Play Chess Without the Queen?

PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, by *Ludwig Wittgenstein*. German text, with a facing translation into English by *G. E. H. Anscombe*. Macmillan. $6.00.

FOR TWENTY YEARS NOW, philosophers have been trying to grasp the directions taken by this book—under the disadvantage of not possessing it. During this period, in for example John Wisdom's *Other Minds* and Friedrich Waismann's outstanding articles, we have been getting the work of men who (some more, some less) were influenced by Wittgenstein and learnt from him, though each has contributed something of importance himself. Together they represent, with many others besides, that school of "linguistic" philosophy so different from the Logical Positivism it is often confused with. It was, of course, Wittgenstein himself who, in 1922, produced the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which (at least for the English-speaking world) was the basic if by no means the typical text of Logical Positivism. But in about 1930, growing fundamentally dissatisfied with his own earlier work, he began to transform philosophy for a second time. In this period, however, he published virtually nothing; his impact was through oral teaching, the private circulation of manuscripts, and the publications of others. Now, two years after his death, the first volume of those writings which represent his later period of thought has been published; and since his influence has not only been profound in every branch of philosophy, but has spread rapidly to psychology, criticism, jurisprudence, sociology and other fields, the appearance of this book is an event of permanent importance.

Knowing this background, some readers may at first be disappointed. The fact is, that Wittgenstein's unwillingness to publish during his lifetime was a tragedy. Now, printed for the first time, the novelty of his work is dulled because we have so often seen the same kind of thing, done more crudely or occasionally perhaps done as well, in other people's books, in academic journals, and in academic conversation. The source of the river has somehow turned up within the estuary. This book, moreover, is a long series of philosophical "remarks"; there is a good deal of local continuity, but no explicit structure underlying the whole; and in spite of his highly fluent knowledge of English, Wittgenstein wrote it in his native Austrian German, of which the translator has preserved the sense well, but not all the vivid terseness, the grittiness. The author's subtlety of mind, and in some respects extraordinary psychological perceptiveness, are plain at once. But it is some time before one feels the full

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power and pull of the book, and begins to understand the legend that Wittgenstein's pupils never went away half taught; either they learnt nothing at all, or in effect they were forced to re-mould their whole lives and minds in the effort to master what he had to say.

Philosophical Investigations has virtually no technical terms. The only one, in fact, is "language-game": any distinctive activity, by one person or among several, which is carried out through words. "Language-task" might here and there have served Wittgenstein's purpose better: "language-game" may sound misleadingly frivolous. But it does do something important. If we think over a number of idioms containing "play" or "game" (horse-play, card-playing, music-playing, "gaming", perhaps even the game of the hunter's quarry) we notice how often an activity, especially a co-operative one, which is distinctive, and has definite limits which we can keep within or quite definitely exceed, is thought of as a "game" to be "played"; and can notice, too, how rarely it is that urban adults amuse or occupy themselves, together or even alone, in ways other than language-using ones. Our play is to talk; using words is our chief, almost our only game. Thus Wittgenstein's at first inept term hints at whole ranges of the part in our lives which is taken up by words—at the whole setting within which language is used, and from which, therefore, it is reasonable to expect that it will derive its importance and its quality: if one says its "significance", perhaps the pun on the word will prove to have its point.

Consisting as it does of descriptions of picturesque "language-games" invented by the author, of a multitude of invented but commonplace-seeming situations, and of subtle comments on the fine grain of everyday experiences and feelings, this book may to some readers not seem like philosophy at all. Occasionally, Wittgenstein inserts a remark about his general purpose in writing, or the general nature of philosophy; but one really needs to have other philosophical writings in mind, so as to see how far Wittgenstein is from inventing his difficulties in order to have something to solve, and so indeed as not to grow bored with what might sometimes seem pointless and repetitive. When, in the first pages of the book, he discusses *meaning*, for example, one should have in mind something like C. I. Lewis's "The question, how meaning *can* be objective and shared, when the psychological states which are bearers of this meaning are separate existences and not even identical in their qualitative content, is one of the important problems of meaning" (*Mind and the World Order*, p. 69). When he discusses *believing*, one might recall Russell's "There are at least three kinds of belief . . . each of these I regard as constituted by a certain feeling or complex of sensations, attached to the content believed" (*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 250). When willing is in question, perhaps something like Ross's strange "A fully deliberate act . . . in this process there is involved not only the activity of setting oneself to bring about some change, but the previous activity of resolving so to set oneself" (*The Foundations of Ethics*,

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p. 203). Despite his innocent-seeming style, Wittgenstein could not be dealing with assertions like these more pointedly, more menacingly, than in fact he is.

The strange method is, of course, deliberate. This is partly for a reason given in the Preface: "I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But, if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own." There is no doubt that the technique is an irritant, the informal colloquial style is abrasive, whereas polished elegance in philosophical writing can too easily soothe and smooth the reader's mind to an egg-like unresponsiveness. But there is also another reason for this oblique and fragmentary approach: one that comes from what Wittgenstein has to say. For there is a sense in which his work is almost entirely negative, almost entirely a matter of showing that this and that and the other ingenious philosophical theory or explanation is perfectly unnecessary—for *no* theory is necessary. "This real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to" (§133). Wittgenstein's twin tasks are thus to refute, and to render superfluous: and at least the first of these can often be performed by an isolated remark pointing to a particular absurdity or mistake, whereas positive argument must proceed somehow more generally.

Wittgenstein himself, no doubt, would barely have welcomed any summary account of what he had to say. But for all that, a reviewer ought to risk one. It should be said, therefore, that Wittgenstein's subject-matter, as he presents it, is that varied and important class of situations—the whole situations—in which we might utter propositions which begin "I mean . . ."; "I hope . . ."; "I believe . . ."; "I understand . . ."; "I intend . . ."; "I remember . . ."; "I feel . . ."; and so on. And to discuss these is to philosophize about meaning, universals, concepts, propositions about the past and the future, memory, the "Will", consciousness, opinion, and so on. Each time, the view which Wittgenstein tries to refute is that propositions of this kind relate only to one highly distinctive, "queer" part of our life—to wit, mental processes and acts, states of consciousness, etc.; and that this relation is of the highly distinctive kind, also requiring a special account, which we call "stating", or "describing". In contrast to this, the view he puts forward is that propositions of these kinds relate to a broad and loose part of our life (sometimes our behaviour over a period, sometimes our "dispositions"—there is a problem here—sometimes certainly also our feelings, awareness, "mental life"); and that they relate to all this in the large, and above all *varied* way of having a familiar use, a known and straightforward function, in a "language-game" which we have learnt in the course of time, are perfectly familiar with and confident about, and know quite well how to teach to others—whatever we pretend our philosophical difficulties are. "Don't ask for the meaning," he says: "ask for the *use*."

The direction in which Wittgenstein's arguments move is thus towards showing either, or both, of two things. First, that even without, in a particular case,

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knowing anything about "mental states" and so forth, we can use all these expressions in their normal senses, and know when they are apt and when they are not. Therefore, they do not "mean" or prove the existence of, any "queer" mental states: though we all know, of course, that they occur simultaneously, often enough, with perfectly familiar ones. Second, the queer mental states and processes which the philosophers allege they discover would not satisfy the demands made of them, even were they really to exist. "We are trying to get hold of the mental process of understanding which seems to be hidden behind [reading the words, feelings of familiarity and confidence, etc.] . . . But we do not succeed . . . for even supposing I had found something that happened in all those cases of understanding, why should *it* be the understanding? And how can the process of understanding have been hidden, when I said, 'Now I understand' *because* I understood" (§153). In other words, the alleged mental processes are neither necessary nor sufficient.

Wittgenstein's typical method is that of analogies: in producing which his mind is astonishingly fertile ("A main cause of philosophical disease—a one-sided diet: one nourishes one's thinking with only one kind of example", §593). Sometimes his best analogies are only for illustration. The varieties of language, he says, are like the handles in a locomotive-cabin, all similar in outward appearance, but varying in how they work; or language is like a city with a mazey old part, and rigidly regular modern suburbs. At other times they are typical philosopher's analogies, and support the argument itself. They liken the situation which threatens to breed a philosopher's puzzle to situations about which we are not perplexed at all: as one may see, in reverse as it were, when Wittgenstein writes (§524):

> Don't take it as a matter of course, but as a remarkable fact, that pictures and fictitious narratives give us pleasure, occupy our minds. ('Don't take it as a matter of course' means: find it surprising, as you do some things which disturb you. Then the puzzling aspect of the latter will disappear, by your accepting this fact as you do the other.)

At other times the analogy likens the philosopher's gravely-posed difficulty to some obvious frivolity:

> 'You were looking for *him*? You can't even have known if he was there!'—But this problem really does arise when one looks for something in mathematics. One can ask, for example, how it was possible so much as to *look for* the trisection of the angle (§463).
>
> My aim is: to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense (§464).

But this account, as I have given it, is rather too simple: for the effect of Wittgenstein's unremitting deluge of contrasts and likenesses is to wean us from

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all classifications, and make us conscious of the exact quality and nuance of each different use of words, each individual case of a "language-game". To philosophize is to theorize, which is to classify, which is to crudify. "I am saying that the phenomena have no one thing in common . . . to repeat: don't think, but look!" (§§65 and 66). Mental activities, like everything else, get the same name not from a single mysterious something that runs constantly through every example, like a thread-mark in bank-notes, but through the predominant tendency of an indefinite number of partial resemblances. And by this means Wittgenstein seems able, constantly, to resolve our perplexity simply by reminding us of what we knew. "The difference lay in the difference of situation," he blandly says (§166 and elsewhere)—in the whole pattern of what we were doing over a period of time, not in some momentary mental figment. A smiling mouth does not smile except in a face (§583). But instead of surveying these whole situations, we invent a pair of hypothetical ones, like reading aloud normally, and reciting by heart while we look at the print; then we *suppress* the difference by which we created the contrast (it cannot be merely that which is the point); and finally we demand to be *shown* a difference (for surely there is *some* difference!) residing in a truncated part of the event, and such that it fits into a fine-sounding theory. We look for the artichoke by stripping off its leaves (§164).

Perhaps it is not yet time to try to evaluate this book. One's main reactions are pleasure and interest that the material has appeared in its first fully public form. Certainly this is not the place to examine the comparatively few points at which Wittgenstein seems wrong in a detail, or seems for the moment to have blurred his own argument. But the editors have printed, as epigraph, a remark in German by Nestroy to the effect that progress on the whole looks bigger than it really is: one supposes that they may be warning those who would make Wittgenstein a cult, and certain features of the book make this warning a fair one. In the first place, it covers by no means the whole range of philosophy. It barely touches ethics (but see §77), metaphysics, or (except certainly by implication) the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge; and philosophers may come to accept an account of language and consciousness like Wittgenstein's, perhaps, but still, in these other fields, produce theories far more elaborate and ambitious than he would have liked. For there is a danger in arguing, as Wittgenstein does, that philosophy need not produce ingenious theories, *because* our experience, being straightforward and quite familiar, does not warrant it. Those who disagree about the straightforwardness, or who find that what after all *must* be familiar, might be deceptively so, are virtually invited to begin the ingenuity.

Second, there is undoubtedly more dogmatism in Wittgenstein's work than one might realize at first. He likens philosophy to therapy (§133), and if this is a valid likeness philosophy must be dogmatic: therapist and patient (or

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his representatives) agree in advance as to what a solution is like, and progress towards it is by treatment, not by argument. Similarly, Wittgenstein's book will most easily persuade those who had previously supposed themselves obliged, rather against their natural inclination, to accept elaborate philosophical theories because constrained to it by argument; but will be less influential with those whose speculative bent springs more directly and intimately from the quality of their experience. " 'This queer thing, thought'—but it does not strike us as queer when we are thinking," he writes. *Is* that the best time to judge? Or take two other remarks: "Of course, if the words 'language', 'experience', 'world', have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words 'table', 'lamp', 'door' " (§97); and, on the subject of the future's resembling the past, his uncompromising "the question here is not one of an approximation to logical proof" (§481). Surely, even while agreeing with these, one cannot but know that others will refuse to agree, without argument. As it happens, one example taken by Wittgenstein as a piece of patent nonsense to which disguised nonsense should be assimilated (see §463, quoted above) appears in all seriousness in Sartre's *L'Etre et le Néant*. Dogmatism like this does not, of course, disprove the fact that the book teems with argument of many kinds. But one suspects that Wittgenstein had not reached his own conclusions through his own arguments: he had, one feels, something like a vision of the mind veritably made of daylight, the *unphilosophizable* mind. "The clarity we are aiming at is *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (§133). These remarks and aphorisms are an attempt, inevitably a struggling one, to give that vision permanent and external form. And in spite of the intrinsic difficulty of this task, the reader may find, just as he is most busily tidying up his counter-arguments, that Wittgenstein has unexpectedly done the trick for him.

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MARVIN MUDRICK

Rugby, Fastidy and a Live Tradition[1]

CONTEMPORARY BEST-SELLERS and would-be best-sellers—not just the cynical lending-library staple, but those that get hailed in *Harper's* and the *Saturday Review*—are at the end of one major tradition of the English novel. It might be called the bourgeois-humane tradition: it accepts the bourgeois (including the Marxist) assumptions about human nature; and what it above all requires, and tries to confirm, in the reader is an active sympathy toward the author's favorite characters. It started with Fielding and achieved its apotheosis of deserved popularity with Dickens; its first axiom is that events and characters are fixed, in unchallengeable commonsense terms, as decisively good or evil; and its suspense resolves itself, through a series of illustrative rather than developing episodes, into the question: Will virtue (*i.e.*, the "sympathetic" characters) triumph?

The tradition provides, doubtless, the formula and excuse for most bad novels. Still, it has worn down not because it was incapable of producing novels that wear very well indeed, but because it depends on a view of human nature, and particularly of the nature of evil, that could be held far more confidently, in their times, by the authors of *Joseph Andrews* and *Great Expectations* than by a twentieth-century novelist of comparable awareness. The remnant of the tradition—*Too Late the Phalarope* and *The Chain in the Heart* are instances—has tended to lapse into a hybrid of compassion and sociology, staple of the weekend reviewers.

The Chain in the Heart is too obviously sober and hard-working for raves. It is an old-fashioned sort of chronicle novel done with careful accuracy of detail in manners and background. Its novelty is in its subject, a Negro family; and Mr. Creekmore's treatment, admirably, avoids both jazziness and arm-chair rabble-rousing. But the detail provokes no interest or pattern except as verifiable detail; it fails to enliven events and characters that are depressingly type-cast, in predictable flat variety. The reviews have been respectful and brief.

The reception of *Too Late the Phalarope,* on the other hand, has been ecstatic; the reviews are more entertaining than the novel. "Pick [it] up," says

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[1]THE CHAIN IN THE HEART, by *Hubert Creekmore.* Random House. $3.75. TOO LATE THE PHALAROPE, by *Alan Paton.* Scribner. $3.00. TORMENT, by *Pérez Galdós.* Farrar, Straus and Young. $3.50. THE DESIRE AND PURSUIT OF THE WHOLE, by *Frederick Baron Corvo.* New Directions. $4.00. YOU SHALL KNOW THEM, by *Vercors.* Little, Brown. $3.50. THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES, by *Robert Musil.* Coward-McCann. $4.00. CHÉRI and THE LAST OF CHÉRI, by *Colette.* Farrar, Straus and Young. $3.50.

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John Barkham in the *Saturday Review* (August 22, 1953), "and instantly you are transported into another world. You fall under the magic of a prose that is without peer of its kind and find yourself caught up in a profound and moving story that will wring your heart. And if that is not literature, what is?" "A prose . . . Biblical in rhythm and clarity and intuitive in its discernment of human motives," says Edward Weeks in the *Atlantic* (September, 1953); "Pieter's fate is as inescapable as Macbeth's." The *Herald-Tribune* reviewer (August 23, 1953) puts the novel on a level with *Crime and Punishment*. Alfred Kazin (*N. Y. Times Book Review*, August 23, 1953) rather uneasily, and enlighteningly, praises it as a social document by a "sensitive liberal" who "brings to the discussion of certain social problems a patient awareness and sympathy that more powerful writers no longer share." Mr. Kazin gives the trick away: Alan Paton is on the right side, he means well, he is compassionate; and, finding all these qualifications bathed in "every sad cadence" of a feeble-minded pseudo-Biblical prose (very unlike Mr. Creekmore's unpretending journalism), the critic has no choice but to decide as Professor Highet does (*Harper's*, September, 1953), in a sudsy muddle of art and civics, that "In a few years a Nobel Prize ought to go to the South African humanitarian, Alan Paton. He is a great spirit. His superb new novel. . . ."

Here are a few samples of the magic of the prose, its sad cadence, its intuitive discernment of human motives:

> For the truth was he had fathered a strange son, who had all his father's will and strength, and could outride and outshoot them all, yet had all the gentleness of a girl, and strange unusual thoughts in his mind, and a passion for books and learning, and a passion for the flowers of veld and kloof, so that he would bring them into the house and hold them in his hands, as though there were some deep meaning in them.
>
> * * *
>
> He caught me by the arms and kissed me on both cheeks, and looked at me as though I were his mother, which is a deep pleasure for a woman like myself.
>
> * * *
>
> And after the game some would go to the Royal for a drink of beer, and then you could hear the laughing and shouting from the bar, the kind of thing some women fear; but I have never feared it, for rugby itself is coarse and rough, and my own brother, who never touched but one woman in his life, can be coarse and rough himself. And it is a strange thing that his son never jested coarse and rough, and no one jested with him coarse and rough; and whether that was because of his mother, or because of some deep thing that twisted wrong, God knows, I do not know.

Mr. Paton's novel is, if not sad, certainly one of the most despondent ever

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written, unrelieved by a single break in the whiny self-fondling prose or the accumulation of dull bleak items building toward the doom, so much *more* inescapable than Macbeth's, of the dejected hero: *I Remember Mama* fitted for humane right-thinking reviewers (and saved from TV) by social problems, sex, and a prevailing suspicion that things are pretty awful; one more nail in the coffin of Fielding's good-hearted novel.

It was, apparently, still alive in Spain at the turn of the century. Pérez Galdós has been compared to Dickens; and *Torment* (republished recently in a translation by J. M. Cohen) has Dickensian affinities in the gusto and range, as well as the occasional tiring excess, of its caricature. But there is a closer affinity with Gogol: not merely because Galdós' subject and target is a corrupt and impoverished bureaucracy hardly distinguishable from Gogol's, but because the Spaniard shares with the Russian a sustained, dryly impartial ironic penetration that English novelists have, as a species, always seemed too provincial to develop or grow up to.

Galdós' success is of a sort possible, perhaps, only during that brief period when the novel was both the respectable and the intellectually inclusive literary form, when it was read by everyone who read at all, and unquestioned in its right to deal at leisurely length with the most ordinary lives. *Torment* is remarkable for its full image, embedded in the action, of everyday life in nineteenth-century Madrid; but it is most remarkable for one of the prize everyday couples of fiction: the Bringases, Francisco and Rosalia—the bureaucratic wedding of smugness and religiosity attended by mutual congratulations—contentedly maintaining their distinct and unalterable vacuities, keeping up with a rickety Graustarkian court by means of borrowed theater boxes, missed meals, undernourished children, mistreated poor relations, patched clothing, and saved pieces of string:

> In the summer of '65, when the Northern railway had just been opened, that family considered it improper not to go to San Sebastián. For this purpose Don Francisco suspended the main course at meals for three months and the journey was achieved in August, on the strength, naturally, of free rail tickets. . . .
>
> [He] was a man who would stoop to pick up a cork or an unbent nail if he saw one lying in the street. Blank sheets of the letters he received served him to write the majority of his replies. He had a box which was a branch of the scrap market and there was no old and useful object that could not be found in it . . . He subscribed to no newspaper, and had never bought a book in his life, for when Rosalía wanted to read a novel there was always someone to lend it to her. And the same rule of economy was so well applied to his time that Bringas never lacked a moment to brush his suit or get the mud off his trousers. When Prudencia was very busy preparing the meals or washing the clothes, the head of the household would go into the kitchen in his

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> shirt-sleeves and was not too proud to fill the lamps with oil or make a salad; and on cleaning days he put up the pierced paper edgings in the kitchen with his own hands. . . .

As for Amparo, the good, rather vegetable heroine, who gives in just once too often, makes a botch of everything she tries, even suicide, and finds an unexpected kind of happiness at the end, the author manages, with complete fidelity to her limitations, to make her likable and poignant always, and almost tragic at the moment of her shame. Even the noble-savage hero, a stock figure through most of the novel, is brilliantly rescued in the conclusion, in which he proves—with perfect consistency after all—to be not so conventionally noble as he has seemed. But nothing changes, whatever seems to; the world and its Bringases survive; and virtue, solid and recognizable, though of a more sophisticated variety than Dickens', triumphs.

The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole is, like most bad novels, in the same tradition; but it is so stubbornly, and so unintentionally, a burlesque of Plot Number One of the tradition—virtuous hero versus wicked, or at least indifferent, world—as to explode into the wildest comedy, incidentally illuminating similar but solemnly accepted burlesques. The boy-girl slave-heroine is Italian; and the author, anticipating by a generation (the book was written about 1909) another cropped-headed boy-girl, thoughtfully translates her into pidgin-Hemingway: " 'Sior, he is a brave, and very beneficent; and, as for me, I am appassionated for pictures' "; and into this kind of dialogue, interchangeable with any Hemingway "love" scene:

> "It was yours."
> "Then you are me, and I am you."
> "Sissior. My beloved is mine and I am his."
> "When did you know that?"
> "Sior, when but as soon as I knew that you had seen me."

It is tempting to let quotes do the job unaided: except for those who share Mr. Auden's prefatory compassion, the novel is unfailingly uproarious. The hero describes the heroine unclothed, "the form of a noble boy, in all but sex": "Where should he find a simile for the generous spread of her candour and softness and firmness and long strong vigorous pallor, for her naïve freshness and innocent unusedness, for her unstained stainableness?" On the hero as a buried horse: ". . . he was . . . saddled with an unploughed field of female, seventeen years old, shaped like a boy and having a boy's abilities." On his virtues: "His was the knightly soul; and his deeds were the deeds of a champion fighting the battles of others, neglecting his own" (the hero's time, by the way, is taken up almost exclusively with his ferocious orations, by mail and in person, against anyone somehow getting in his way or keeping his books unpublished). On his abilities: "The pace had been terrific: but his magnificent

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strength (sapped though it was by night-work and by the strain of making and wearing a dauntless defiant front to the world), and perhaps also his unconquerable sense of superiority which answered to every call and kept him taut and erect enabled him not to show signs of distress before the boy." The author tells us that Nicholas even prays better than anybody else, in his own unexampled and warrantedly God-pleasing fashion; and he brings his protégée to church as soon as possible because "One thing which had been worrying him was the health of the boy's [he always calls the girl a boy] immortal soul." Corvo's style is not only startling for its expanses of pure adolescent fantasy-language but animated by new past tenses—"swang," "slank," "ununderstanded"—and such interesting words as "operose," "diorthotic," "fastidy," "suspicacious," "amoenely." Now and then he sounds enough like S. J. Perelman to convince us, nearly, that he's kidding: "Crabbe hardened in his cane arm-chair, afflicted by verification of his instinct. There came a mouth-taste of sour milk mixed with very bad egg and rancid oil in a rusty old meat-tin; and a warm ache gasped inside of him. It was, of course, indigestion, caused by angry contempt temporarily paralyzing intestinal muscular action—peristalsis, in short. He commanded boiling water, and moodily sipped the potion."

Corvo was no doubt paranoid, as Messrs. Auden (in the Foreword) and Symons (in the Introduction) notify us; but the image of him that persists (he and Crabbe are identical, and the book is autobiography spattered with Nietzschean and erotic daydreams[2]), behind all his airs, sponging, edginess, his spitting tantrums and arcane gibberish, is after all only the image of the wistful arty homosexual, who doesn't ask for much: just the grateful acknowledgment of his superiority. It would be impolite, however, to ask the publisher what sort of reader (apart from the unexpected sort who takes it as burlesque) he expects this reprint to gratify.

You Shall Know Them attempts nothing so English as Corvo's self-portrait in the guise of a novel. It assumes an imperturbable reasonableness, and does its best to represent a tradition never domesticated in English fiction (*Rasselas* comes to mind as the only notable English instance): the speculative tradition, according to the Voltairean terms of which characters and events are less important than—in practice, usually obliterated by—the generalizations that predict or derive from them. Voltaire's wit and narrative sense or the energy of Johnsonian commonplace may keep this sort of fiction moving; but it is otherwise likely to be stalled by cleverness, trickery, pontificality, or a mixture of these to the author's taste. Vercors is no Voltaire, and his novel is a contrived little fable, sprinkled with useful bits of zoölogical, anthropological,

[2]Seen not from his entrails but from a distance and through a medium (as in Symons' *The Quest for Corvo*) the spoiled-priest, failed-artist, phony-aristocrat, slandering, incorruptibly mendacious Corvo achieves, by his immense industry in behalf of his claims, pathos and almost dignity; though Symons' opinion of Corvo's talent is, to say the least, overgenerous.

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and legal information, and furnished with a wise old judge and a pre-cooked definition of man to finish it off and leave the hero unhanged.

The Man Without Qualities, set promisingly in the moribund imperial Vienna of 1913, is much more interesting both as speculation and as fiction. Most immediately striking is the author's enormous appetite for aphorism, platitude, definition, generalization, inference—any large statement that can be made about the behavior of human beings: "there is no important idea that stupidity does not know how to make use of"; "People liked listening to him because it was so nice that a man who had so many ideas also had money"; and—precise epitome of the spirit of any Lucelife page—"He was convinced that 'the people' was 'good'. It was not only his many officials, employers and servants that were dependent on him, but so too, economically, were countless other human beings, and he had never come to know 'the people' from another side, except on Sundays and holidays, when as a bright, jolly, bustling crowd it came pouring out from behind the scenery like the chorus in the opera. Anything that did not fit in with this conception he therefore attributed to 'subversive elements'. . . ."

Musil's speculations are in fact more interesting than his narrative; but they are less consistently interesting than he seems to think, nor can they sustain—diffuse and tediously digressive as they often are—our interest in the characters and events intended to suggest and vindicate them. The philosophy and the action do not quite mesh; the Collateral Campaign for planning the Jubilee Celebrations of the Seventieth Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne remains a vague and grandiose irony never convincingly assimilated into the live situations of the novel; and we are left with a great deal of elaborate wit, too much description and summary, and a few entertaining characters: Walter, the man with every talent but not enough of any; his wife, Clarisse, who "had always had the intention of marrying no one but a genius," and who "refused herself to Walter for weeks when he played Wagner"; above all, the incomparable Bonadea.

This "wife of a well-respected man and . . . fond mother of two fine little boys . . . had only one fault, and this was that she was liable to be stimulated to a quite uncommon degree by the mere sight of men. She was by no means lustful; she was sensual in the way that other people have other troubles, such as sweating of the hands or blushing easily. . . ." Bonadea is treated kindly and with a not wholly ironic respect by the author, as she deserves: she always seduces the hero with pleading sensitiveness and accepts his insults with silent dignity, standing by her "half-resumed clothes" that lie "on the carpet forming that small, charmingly mythological foam-crater out of which Aphrodite rises." At the end of one scene, in particular, she is magnificent. The hero, arguing in behalf of a criminal, asks her suddenly:

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> "But if you so insistently condemn the act . . . how then, Bonadea, are you going to justify your adulteries?"
>
> It was, above all, the plural that made the remark so indelicate. Bonadea said nothing. She settled down, with a contemptuous air, in one of the comfortable armchairs, and, visibly affronted, gazed up at the dividing-line between wall and ceiling.

Her silences have more substance than all the talk in the novel, including the author's; and there are too few of them.

Bonadea would be more at home with Colette; and Colette acclimates us to another tradition, as Continental as Musil's and as English as Fielding's. Its great representatives in English fiction are Richardson, Austen, George Eliot (occasionally sidetracked by speculative yearnings), and James; but its only contemporary representative is Colette. It is not, characteristically, speculative or moralistic or compassionate, but psychological; its preference is to investigate states of mind, especially as they modify events and one another; its axiom is that everything changes; and it resolves itself not in virtue triumphant or nobly defeated, but in the fact of decisive change. (The ersatz modern instance is of course the narcissistic personal-problem—alcoholism, homosexuality, politics—novel, whose interest is primarily clinical or pornographic.)

The sense of change is the event of *Chéri* and *The Last of Chéri*[3]. The protagonist of the first half is Léa, a beautiful courtesan in the last stage of a desperately preserved beauty, reluctantly in love with the young spoiled beautiful son of an old courtesan; in the second half, it is Chéri himself, married to a young *parvenue* (the daughter of another courtesan), but unable to forget Léa's easy opulence, and unable to endure living after his terrible single visit to Léa grown old. At the end of the first half, appropriately, Léa is broken by Chéri's rejection (he sees, on their final morning after, her "raddled neck") just as she has yielded for the first time to the mirage of a permanent liaison; at the very end, Chéri, having alienated and destroyed his wife, having lost Léa to the image of her gross epicene old age and rediscovered her in the time-stopping photos that an old colleague of hers has saved, settles back in his Japanese robe on a divan, surrounded in his last refuge with pinups of Léa, and shoots himself through the head.

The obsession with time and the flesh, with youth and old age, dominates the book as totally as it fails to deform it: the obsession is always the characters'; it is presented, with every finishing detail, not acquiesced in or (necessarily) shared. It first appears as a fate to Léa when she sees the septuagenarian Lili—"her skinny bosom crinkled like the wattles of a turkeycock"—showing off her adolescent Italian prince:

> Lili caught him in flight, pulled his head down to her scaly chest, call-

[3]First published in 1920 and 1926, respectively; reissued in a new translation by Roger Senhouse.

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ing the onlookers to witness: "Do you know what this is, Madame, do you know what this is? This, ladies, is the love of my life!"

—a warning from which Léa escapes with her vision of death:

> Lili's quilted fists, old Aldonza's deformed stumps, Charlotte Peloux's hard fingers had seized upon her wrist, her sleeve, her gold-mesh bag. She snatched her arm away from all these claws and succeeded in laughing again, teasingly: "No, it's far too early in the day, it would spoil everything! It's my secret." And she rushed away to the hall.
>
> But the door opened in front of her and a desiccated old fellow, a sort of playful mummy, took her into his arms: "Léa, lovely creature, a kiss for your little Berthellemy, or he won't let you pass!"
>
> She gave a cry of fright and impatience, struck off the gloved bones retarding her progress, and fled.

The bad or spotty novelist invites quotation; Colette defies it, she is too continuously truthful to the event, and no such seamless conviction of form has been achieved in the English novel since Jane Austen. The images organize themselves: Chéri's young wife, neutral and expectant till compressed into a cold force of her own by his contempt for her ingenuousness; the boudoirs, described in terrifying material detail, like museums or embalming parlors; Chéri passing mirrors and the admiring glances of women on the street; Léa anticipating the progress of each wrinkle, fighting to bar from her mirror—till fifty-five? sixty?—"that monster, an old woman"; nothing sinister, no villains or conspiracies, except decay and old age:

> "Speaking of proportions," Léa continued, "you'll never come across anything to touch Chéri. . . . You see, Chéri, you've come at just the right moment. You ought to blush. Valérie, if you can remember what Chéri was like only six, or say seven years ago. . . ."
>
> "But certainly, of course, I remember clearly. And Monsieur has not changed so very much, after all. . . . And you were so proud of him!"
>
> "No," said Léa.
>
> "You weren't proud of him?"
>
> "No," said Léa with perfect calm, "I was in love with him."
>
> She manoeuvred the whole of her considerable body in his direction, and let her gay glance rest upon Chéri, quite innocently. "It's true I was in love with you, very much in love, too."
>
> He lowered his eyes, stupidly abashed before these two women, the stouter of whom had just proclaimed so serenely that she and he had been lovers. Yet at the same time the voluptuous and almost masculine tone of Léa's voice besieged his memory, torturing him unbearably.

It is a unique anatomy of undeluded sensuality; like the greatest fiction, a study of consequences; and one of the masterpieces of the severest, perhaps the best, living writer of fiction, whose work renews one's confidence in the form and possibilities, within and beyond any tradition, of the novel.

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Sirs,

I wish Mr. Stanley Edgar Hyman had decided to deliver one of his customary straightforward attacks on my novel.[1] He might have called it badly-written, absurdly-plotted, dull, artificial, a mawkish love story. In that case no reply would be necessary.

Instead, Mr. Hyman gift-wrapped his package with a few favorable red ribbons and concealed inside an infernal machine designed to blow the recipient's head off. He decided that I had switched the gender of one of my characters in order to make a heterosexual love story out of a homosexual one.

This was the evidence he gave to prove that Frances, the girl in the story, was actually to be taken as a man: On a rainy day she wears an old tan raincoat; at one point she is able to throw a stone accurately; she greets Howard (Mr. Hyman says) "with a manly handshake." That is all.

College girls who wear tan raincoats and who can throw stones with pretty good aim are common in my part of the country, although they may not exist at Bennington. As for the "manly handshake"—this is Mr. Hyman's distortion. It is true that the girl and the man in the story shake hands once—a not unheard-of custom—but they do it as a gesture to end a disagreement and, quite the opposite of "manly", the girl's hand is described as ". . . warm and soft, a bird I could not keep for fear of crushing nor release because I could not bear to lose it."

Plainly that evidence adds up to nothing for Hyman's case and we see the old failing of literary critics beginning to operate here—the process of taking over the story and rewriting it to suit their own ideas and inclinations. All of Frances's behavior in the book shows her to be a girl. I meant her to be a girl. She is a girl. Out of more than forty reviewers of the book, only Mr. Hyman took her to be anything else.

Next, Mr. Hyman wants to prove that Howard is having an affair with a man named Francis. One of the characters who has no more than a hint of what is going on makes up a hypothetical case about shoplifting. Her husband (who knows nothing of what is happening) says, "You're mixing your sexes. Shoplifting is a woman's crime." Howard is the "shoplifter". If Mr. Hyman were logical, that would make Howard a woman. A student (not a "colleague" as Hyman says) remarks that he thought Howard "hated women". But he says that only because he has observed a disagreement between Howard and the girl, Frances. I have tried to make some sense of Mr. Hyman's quotation of another remark (of the wife's), but it resists any logical application. Finally, Mr. Hyman decides in one paragraph that Howard is a "girlish man" and in the next but one that he is a "tyrannous master". At this point I feel almost

[1] Cf. Stanley Edgar Hyman, "The Albertine Strategy", The Hudson Review, Autumn, 1953.

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that I must have gone a little mad and added another character to the book called, improbably, "Stanley Edgar Hyman", simply for the purpose of confusing my readers.

Gordon, the sixteen-year-old son, is homosexual too, Hyman believes. His description of several older-women is not flattering, he is the friend of an eccentric old professor, and he falls in love with an Indian girl described by Hyman as, "swathed ambiguously in a sari". Things begin to whirl. A girl's tan raincoat is transvestite and the traditional dress of an Indian woman is a sign of sexual ambiguity. Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays. The British are the descendents of the lost tribes of Israel. The lemmings go out to sea looking for Atlantis.

I would be pleased at Mr. Hyman's disclosures if I had written the kind of story he thought I wrote. After the obtuseness of the readers and reviewers, I ought to be delighted that somebody, at last, had found the secret. But there isn't any secret, of course, and the "disclosures" are fake.

Mr. Hyman takes over part of Anthony West's argument to the effect that an affair between a sexually aggressive woman and a passive man "does not exist in the world the rest of us live in." If there are no such things, the argument goes, then we had better look for a more devious meaning in the story.

There's no real reply to this except to wonder what kind of sheltered places West and Hyman live in. This is a common theme from the legends of mediaeval succubi and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", down through Shaw's plays, Thurber's cartoons, Sadie Hawkins Day (is Li'l Abner a homosexual and Daisy Mae a man?), and the gossip column heroines who capture whole series of rich husbands—in jokes and movies (ever since "The Blue Angel" and Theda Bara) and, particularly, in popular historical novels.

My story was another satiric treatment of the theme and it described a mild and ordinary college teacher caught in a situation containing both the daydreams and the sexual fears of a timid, unaggressive man. The girl remained a stylized figure, seen, as she is, through the eyes of the self-preoccupied Howard. (Hyman's reasoning started off askew because he didn't perceive this.) It's a wrong, unnatural, even "absurd" affair, and it ends that way.

To go back to Mr. Hyman's critical obsession—homosexuality. He thinks that a novel on a homosexual theme would be "culty and special", though not actually taboo. This may be easily the most naive statement in his essay. Are there any Broadway successes, any best-selling novels, any much-interviewed authors around to disprove it?

Then, Mr. Hyman's "varying degrees of consciousness in the author." Biographical criticism of this kind must be done with intelligent perception, honesty, and a considerable knowledge of the person. (Mr. Hyman knows nothing about me personally.) With the sensational critic, it can be used for

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a fast double-play to discredit both book and writer. No criticism of Communism in your book? You must be a sympathizer. Books written by Communist sympathizers are a public danger. The method has been used before.

As I read Mr. Hyman's article, it seemed tediously familiar. I once taught a university class in The 19th Century European Novel. A few of the students were entranced with a similar discovery of "The Albertine Strategy" in *Remembrance of Things Past* and thought it might be a touchstone for all fiction. What about Bazarov in *Fathers and Sons?* They had lots of suspicions about Raskolnikov, they wanted to discuss Tolstoy's Pierre in the light of this, write papers about Prince Myshkin—hardly a character seemed innocent if you *really* looked at him.

The point is that a literary critic, if he sticks odds and ends of evidence together, warps his facts enough, and presents the whole thing with a knowing Freudian air, can prove almost anything to himself—about any book. It might be called "The Hymanine Strategy".

ROBIE MACAULEY

Greensboro, North Carolina

Sirs,

I am sorry that Mr. Macauley, for whatever reason, prefers not to have written the interesting and complicated novel I read and tried to describe, and prefers instead to have written the poor thin novel *he* describes, about "the daydreams and sexual fears of a timid, unaggressive man" on Sadie Hawkins Day. Along with many other readers, I liked and praised *The Disguises of Love* I read; no one, I think, would be very much interested in the comic strip he now claims he intended. Mr. Macauley is not the first novelist to have builded better than he knows or will admit; nor will he, probably, be the last. I am not prepared to be scared out of a critical reading of a novel by the author's waspish insistence that it is not *his* reading, nor am I terrified at the prospect of disagreement with "more than forty reviewers of the book", who may be, for all I know, more than forty licensed Muzak outlets. Mr. Macauley impugns my mind and my methods, which is of course his privilege, but I feel that I must say something in defense of my present employer. If the test of the realism of Mr. Macauley's story is to be an appeal to our experience at Bennington, I would insist that although we may have a number of undergraduates who wear tan raincoats and peg rocks, we have not yet had one who, on first going out to dinner with her married professor, prepared for it by buying him a pair of striped pajamas and smuggling them into his car.

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

North Bennington, Vermont

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